SEPTEMBER 1980 NUMBER 31

THE SPACE GAMER

THE MAGAZINE OF ADVENTURE GAMING

SPECIAL COMPUTER ISSUE

DragonQuest

GALACTIC EMPIRES
THE FANTASY TRIP
MAZE GENERATION
AND 9 PAGES OF REVIEWS

$2.00

TAKE

The Fantasy Trip™

...and go with the best!

Basic Rules

Melee — *BASIC COMBAT*

Wizard — *BASIC MAGIC*

ADDED FUN

MicroQuests*

- Death Test
- Death Test 2
- Grail Quest

**Programmed/Solitaire Adventures*

CREATE YOUR *OWN* ADVENTURES

Advanced Rules

In The Labyrinth
Game Master's Module

For the Experienced

- Advanced Melee
- Advanced Wizard

Game Master Aids

Adventure Supplements

- Tollenkar's Lair
- more coming!

Metagaming Box 15346 SG Austin, TX 78761

At your favorite store or order direct:
In The Labyrinth, Advanced Melee & Advanced Wizard are $4.95 each.
Melee, Wizard, Death Test, Death Test 2, GrailQuest, and Tollenkar's Lair are $2.95 each.
Only U.S. and Canadian orders accepted. Each order must have 50 cents handling charge. *Allow 3 to 6 weeks for delivery.*

THE SPACE GAMER

NUMBER 31 – SEPTEMBER, 1980

Articles

*GAME DESIGN: Theory and Practice * by Schuessler and Jackson*
Fifth in a series: Terrain and Movement 9

KUNG FU 2100 ERRATA 21

Fiction

*SAM BEOWULF * by Joseph Miranda*
What Beowulf might have looked like without a PR agent 4

Computer Gaming

*1980 GAME SOFTWARE SURVEY * by Johnson and Isabelle*
A look at the growing field of computer gaming 10

*DEUS EX MACHINA * by Joseph Power*
Random maze generation 16

Reviews

*GALACTIC EMPIRES * by Bruce Webster* 14
*THE FANTASY TRIP * by Ronald Pehr* 18
*DRAGONQUEST * by Forrest Johnson* 20
CAPSULE REVIEWS 22

GAMES: Artifact; Asteroid Zero-Four; Forest Wars of the Haven; Freedom in the Galaxy; Journey; Mythology; Odysseus; Space Future; Starfleet Wars; Swashbuckler; Timetripper; Wreck of the Pandora; Zargo's Lords. SUPPLEMENTS: Encounters in the Phoenix Quadrant; Inferno; Mountain of Mystery; The Nine Doctrines of Darkness; Overkill, 2nd Edition; Portals of Torsh; The Spellcaster's Bible; Tollenkar's Lair. PLAY AIDS: The Arduin Character Sheets; The Dungeon; The Fantasy Cartographer's Field Book. COMPUTER GAMES: Adventure; DunjonQuest; FS1 Flight Simulator; Network; Space/Space II; Superman; Terrorist; Windfall. HISTORICAL GAMES: Beachhead. BOOKS: The Complete Wargames Handbook.

Departments

WHERE WE'RE GOING 2
GAME MASTER 21
ADVERTISERS 26
ERRATA 29
LETTERS 31
CONTEST 32
NEWS & PLUGS 32
CALENDAR 32
READER ADS 32

ART IN THIS ISSUE:

Chris Carlson (Reprint courtesy Flying Buffalo, Inc.): 26. Joan K. Chladek: 25. Jeff Edmunds: 9. W.C. Ellis: 27. Paul Jaquays: cover, 2, 31. Denis Loubet: 4, 5, 6, 16. Robert E. Manns: 32. Norv Maples: 14, 18, 20, 24. Ken Mitchroney: mailer cover. Dick Shook: 22.

In This Issue

Recognizing the growing interest in computer games, here's our "special computer issue" . . . with a little extra coverage of the electronic side of gaming. In addition to the usual Deus ex Machina and capsule reviews, we've got a survey of game software companies, and a featured review of one of the best multi-player computer games on the market.

Let us know what you think. We plan to increase our computer game coverage in the future – unless you veto it!

Also in this issue:

A featured review of SPI's new FRP game, *DragonQuest*. We thought the cover painting, by Paul Jaquays, was especially appropriate. . .

KUNG FU 2100 errata. Hanging my head in shame, I have to admit there were a couple of errors last issue. Now they're fixed.

The redoubtable Sam Beowulf. "Being a private eye in the Dark Ages doesn't pay much, but it sure beats working in the fields."

And, on page 22, a list of commonly used abbreviations in the sf/fantasy/computer gaming world.

–Steve Jackson

THE SPACE GAMER

Publisher: Steve Jackson
Editor: Forrest Johnson
Art Director: Denis Loubet
Contributing Editors:
Ronald Pehr
Nick Schuessler
Bruce F. Webster
Business Manager: Elton Fewell
Circulation Manager: Monica Stephens

THE SPACE GAMER (ISSN 0194-9977, USPS 434-250) is published monthly by The Space Gamer, 7207 Onion Crossing Dr., Austin, TX 78744. Second class postage paid at Austin, TX. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Space Gamer, P. O. Box 18805, Austin, TX 78760.

All material is copyright 1980 by *The Space Gamer*. All rights reserved.

Printed in U.S.A. by Futura Press, Austin.

Subscription rates, effective 5/15/80:

	US	Canada	Other foreign
One year	$21	$24	$41
Two years	$39	$45	$79
Lifetime	$250	$260	N/A

All prices are in U.S. dollars; payment must be in U.S. dollars.

Where We're Going

Nothing really earth-shattering to report this month. A few comments on our mailing dates (because a lot of you have asked) – and several notes on money, from us to you and vice versa.

TSG Mailing Schedule

The timetable for a typical issue of TSG looks something like this:

Three months before cover date: We start deciding, in general, what will go into the magazine . . . assigning the feature articles, or selecting them from over-the-transom submissions.

10th of the month, two months before cover month: The cover must be chosen and the art sent to the printers, so that a color separation can be made. The cover has to have something to do with the contents – so cover planning starts as soon as the general nature of the issue is known.

15th of the month, two months before cover month: Ad sales close at 12 noon. That is the last chance to cancel ads or (theoretically) to buy new ones for that issue. (Often, we can get an ad in late, if it goes in the Capsules section.) This is the day we make a final decision about what articles get used, and start to plan the pages.

25th of the month, two months before cover month: Theoretically, most of the pages are pasted up by today. The ones that we save until last include the table of contents, this page, the News & Plugs/Calendar page, and the Capsules.

3rd of the month, one month before cover month: Today TSG goes to the printers.

12th of the month, 1 month before cover month: Today is the day the printers are supposed to mail TSG. Usually they make it.

First of the month – cover month. Theoretically, most of you should receive TSG by today. Second-class mail being what it is, sometimes it takes longer. If you haven't gotten your copy by the 10th of the month, something is probably wrong somewhere.

Please keep in mind, by the way, that holidays really mess up the Postal Service. Especially within a month of Christmas, either way, things do get delayed. We'll try to get those issues in the mail early, to make up for it. . . but we're all at the mercy of the postal turtle.

Changes of Address

When you change your address, you need to let us know AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Post office SOP is to destroy undeliverable second-class mail. And if you've moved, that makes it "undeliverable." They don't forward it unless you fill out a form, guaranteeing payment of forwarding postage, ahead of time.

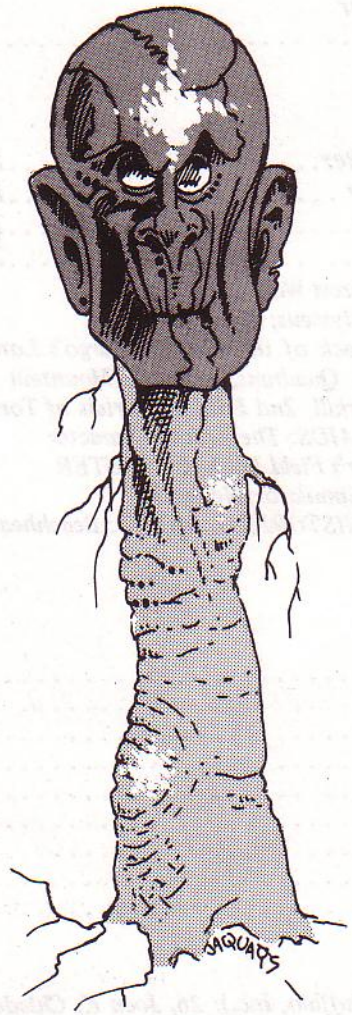
It really doesn't take us long to process a change of address (at least compared to the big magazines). But you've got to give us SOME warning!

Back Issues

Please . . . when you re-subscribe, do it on time. Every week, we get a couple of letters from people whose subscriptions have expired, saying "Please start me with No. 30" . . . or 29, or 28, or whatever.

It hurts when someone asks for something we can't handle – but this is one of them. Subscription issues are processed by the computer and mailed in a batch. To fill a back issue order requires special handling (that's one reason for the additional 50-cent fee on regular TSG

Next Issue



October (No. 32) will be our special TRAVELLER issue. TRAVELLER features will include:

Ship Contest Winner. Complete plans and specifications for a new deep-exploration scout.

Featured review of "Azhanti High Lightning," the new "big" game from GDW.

Capsule reviews of other new TRAVELLER supplements and play aids.

New character types for TRAVELLER.

And a cover by Chris White.

Other features to expect:

The Yaquinto company report. (It didn't make it in time for this issue. Next time, for sure.)

All the regular features, including Wargame Design, Deus ex Machina, and Game Master.

Check your mailing label. If it says "31," this is your last issue. Resubscribe today!

back issue orders). If we started subscriptions with back issues, we'd be doing a lot of extra office work – and the date on your payment wouldn't have anything to do with the date your subscription expires, because you might have started with an earlier issue. Which would throw a wrench into our bookkeeping.

The bottom line: PLEASE resubscribe on time. That way you won't miss any issues. Again, we can process an order pretty quickly, compared to some magazines. This month, for instance, subscription orders that arrived as late as the fourth of August were processed in time for this (September) issue. But if you do miss an issue, you'll have to order it as a back issue. *We can't make a subscription retroactive.*

Conventions

If you're running a gaming or science fiction convention, tell us about it! We'll list it in the Calendar. Ads cost money, but a calendar listing is free. And we'll run it every month from the time you send it until your convention is over.

Contributor Payments

Several contributors have asked if they can take their payments in the form of issues added to their subscriptions, instead of cash.

As of now, yes.

When you send us a review, article, art, or other contribution, you may include a note instructing us to apply payment (if we accept the material) to your subscription. We will do so at the rate of $1.75 per issue (which is the per-issue cost for a one-year subscription). Furthermore, we'll round it up, in YOUR favor. This means, for instance, that a capsule review is worth $5 or 3 issues . . . your choice. If you want part applied to a subscription and part sent in cash, we'll do that, too. (Please, no less than the 3 issue/$5 minimum, and no checks less than $5. The whole reason our minimum payment is $5 in the first place is to keep us from having to fool with tiny amounts.)

Lifetime Subscriptions

From now on (by request) we will accept time payments on Lifetime Subscriptions. All we ask is that each payment be no less than $50, and that the full amount be paid off within 6 months of the first check. We've already gotten a number of Lifetime Subscribers – the support is appreciated! – and maybe this will make it possible for more of you to do the same.

–SJ

We do Games, not Windows!

That's *all* we do!

We're specialists in an age of specialization!

When all we've done in 22 years is games, stands to reason we should know what gamers want by now.

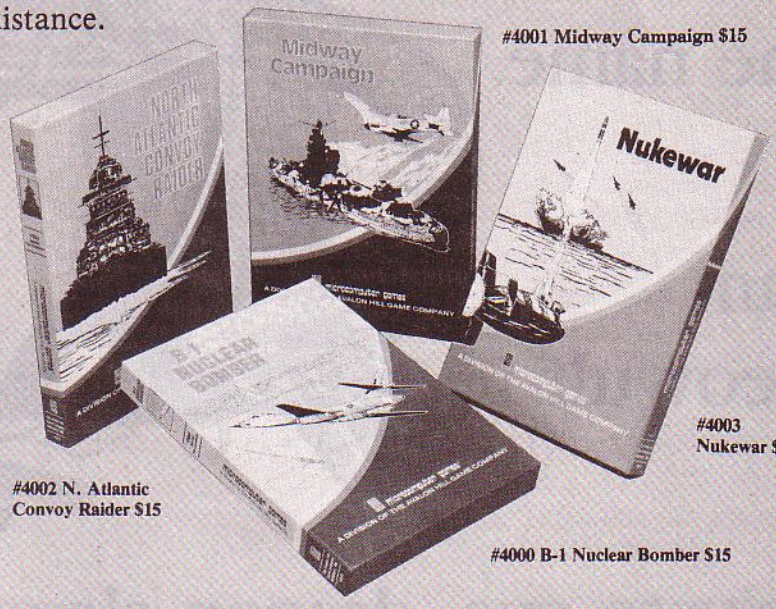
We've published a lot of great games in our time. Like Diplomacy! Panzerblitz! And the entire Squad Leader series!

In fact, we have the highest share of *"best game awards"* among all game publishers.

We also have the highest regard for the gaming potential of home computers. That's why we've created a new company: *Microcomputer Games®*, Inc.

No, they don't do *small* windows!

They do games even Avalon Hill can't do. Games played against home computers programmed to outthink, outsmart, and out-maneuver anyone within cussing distance.



#4001 Midway Campaign $15

#4003 Nukewar $15

#4002 N. Atlantic Convoy Raider $15

#4000 B-1 Nuclear Bomber $15

Here are the first of a new breed of packaged strategy games pitting *"you against the computer."* Each game comes complete with rules and software for the **three most popular** home computers: TRS-80*, Apple II*, and Pet*.

*Registered trademarks for Tandy Corp., Apple Computers Inc., Commodore Business Machines Inc.

Available NOW, along with regular Avalon Hill games!

microcomputer games®

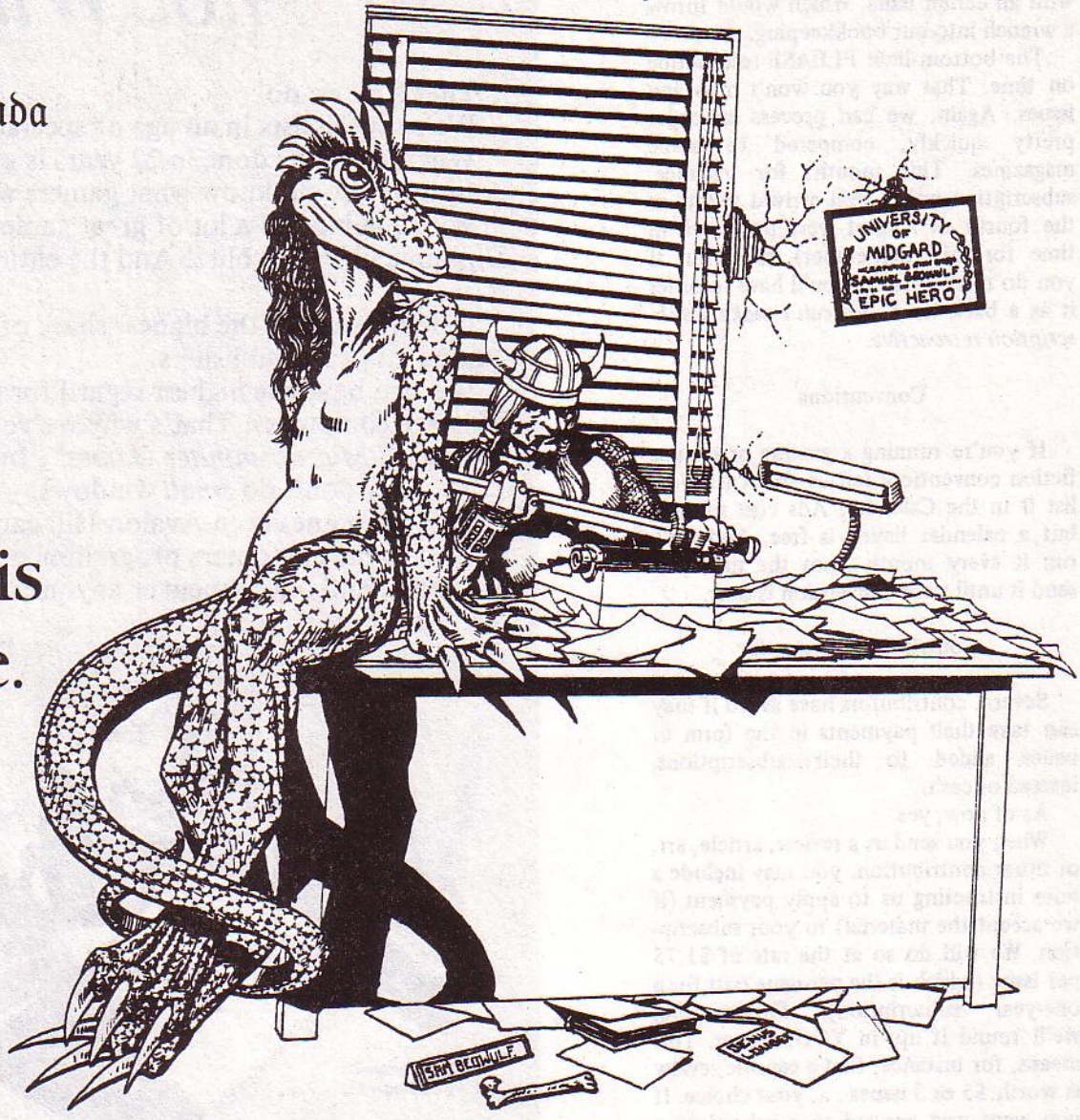
®A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF MICROCOMPUTER GAMES, INC.
A DIVISION OF

The AVALON HILL Game Company

4517 Harford Road • Baltimore, MD 21214

Sam Beowulf

by Joseph Miranda



Beowulf is the name.

Sam Beowulf.

Private eye, dragon slayer, epic hero.

I was sitting in my office on the Lower East side of Denmark, reading *The Daily Scroll* and cleaning my two-handed, double-edged, pearl-hilted sword. I turned to page 15, past the ads for used Viking ships, and picked out an article on yours truly. A column and a half about my last case. It said how someone had been leaning on "King" Hrothgar, owner of a big chain of mead halls. They were really tearing up his customers, trying to get him to pay protection. I found some dragon by the name of Grendel was running this racket. I ended up killing Grendel. Self defense, of course.

Being a private eye in the Dark Ages doesn't pay much, but it sure beats working in the fields.

There was a knock. I put down the paper. In sashayed a dragon. Female. Not bad looking for a legendary beast. Nine feet tall, green scales, long blue hair. A knockout, if you go for dragons, which I don't. But a client's a client.

"How can I help you, sweetheart?"

"My name is Blauhilde," she said, looking at my two-handed, double-edged, pearl-hilted sword. "Some-

one stole my treasure. I don't know what to do."

"Did you report it?"

"I couldn't. I mean . . . ."

So that was it. Ill-gotten treasure.

"Look, sis. Clean up your act. I'm not going to play sap for you."

She swept me with her long lashes. "But you're so big, so strong. Help me, Mr. Beowulf. I'll pay you a hundred crowns a day, plus expenses."

That did it. I had to know more about this case. "Look, sugar, you gotta square with me. What's this all about?"

She shook those lovely blue locks. "I don't know, Mr. Beowulf. I kept my treasure under a pile of bones in the back of my cave. Yesterday it was gone. And now someone is following me."

"If that's your story, it's all right with me. MILES!"

In swaggered Miles the Archer, my partner. He took a look at Blauhilde and smiled. Miles was a dragon's man. I don't know what he saw in them.

I gave him the lowdown. He took her claw and they walked out together. I sat back, trying to add things up. Then I noticed something. My sword was missing! My two-handed, double-edged, pearl-hilted sword!

The epic was thickening.

I woke to the familiar sound of a door being bashed in. My door. There were people in my bedroom. People with swords and maces.

"C'mon, Sam. Get up."

It was Sergeant Unferth of the local precinct. He sneered. "We've got the goods on you this time."

Unferth had been sore at me ever since I solved the Hrothgar case. It had been his assignment. He had ended up walking a beat in the marshes on the South Side of Denmark.

I yawned at him. It was the best I could do. It isn't easy to be hard-boiled when they wake you up at three in the morning.

"We're running you in, Sam. Miles the Archer has been murdered. With your sword, the alchemist says."

"It's a bum rap."

"Tell it to the judge."

But I was getting crafty. While Unferth gloated, I was getting ready to clean him and his boys but good. Suddenly, I jumped out of bed, knocked over a flatfoot, and reached for my two-handed, double-edged, pearl-hilted sword.

Then I remembered it was stolen.

I woke, the second time that night, in the station house, that new dungeon on 23rd St. They had me strapped down, and were ready to work with all the latest lie-detection equipment – hot irons, thumbscrews, all like that.

"I give you ten," Unferth said. "Make like a canary."

"I want my lawyer!"

"Jeez," said Unferth.

The law is the law. They called my mouthpiece and he sat through the whole session. They could torture me all they wanted, but the shyster made sure they didn't deprive me of my rights.

After several hours of screaming, they decided I was telling the truth.

Unferth escorted me to the front door. He said, "Sorry, Sam. Guess I got the wrong man."

"Happens to the best of us," I said.

Then I belted him.

I staggered around the streets for a while. What did it all mean? Who killed Miles? Why did he try to frame me? Where did this dame Blauhilde fit in? I decided to try a few contacts.

By that time, I had recovered enough to swagger instead of stagger. I swaggered into Hrothgar's mead hall, the one on 5th Avenue. It was a long building, dimly lit. Deer antlers all over the place. Lousy decor. I don't know how Hrothgar got into that schtick.

There were the usual customers – Vikings on shore leave, non-union sorcerers, local trolls, elves in from the country, and a few dragons. They were all singing, swilling mead, gambling and fooling with the serving wenches. Hrothgar wasn't there. He and a few associates were on a business trip, raising money on the English seacoast.

In the corner, I saw an old acquaintance. He was big, about fifteen feet tall, with beady eyes sunk into a bloated head, thick arms and legs and a fat gut, from eating too many maidens.

"Hello, Fafnir. Putting on weight, eh? That belly's going to get you in trouble one of these days."

"I'll take my chances. It's better than the hero business."

I played him along. Actually, Fafnir never really was a hero, just a dwarf. He got into some kind of family trouble and had himself turned into a dragon. An improvement, most people said. Now he was a dealer in jewelry and oddments, mostly legitimate. He was starting to get some big ideas.

Of course, one of these days some punk was going to cut his big belly wide open. I kept trying to tell him that. But he wouldn't listen. That's *wyrd*.

He looked around to see if anyone was watching, then pulled something from under the table. A black bird statue, about a foot high. It looked worthless.

"What do you say, Sam? Quality enamel work from Malta. A nice little art piece like this would give your office some class. You can have it for ten crowns."

"No thanks." It looked like looted goods to me. "I'm here on business. What do you know about a treasure belonging to a dragon named Blauhilde?"

"Blauhilde, Blauhilde," he mused, looking up at the smokey ceiling. "Where have I heard that name before?"

I slipped him a few crowns.

"Ah, yes. Now I remember. Her real name is Troll Wife, and she never had any treasure."

This was news. Now I had something to go on. I thanked Fafnir and left.

As I swaggered out, I glimpsed someone get up to follow me. I led him down the block, then ducked into an alley. When he came by, I collared him. He gave a little scream.

"Who the hell are you?" I flashed my knife.

"A friend. Let me go. Please let me go, Mr. Beowulf."

He was about four feet tall, with slender build, bulging eyes and a well-manicured appearance. He had an expensive silk jerkin and several rings on his fingers. His hair reeked of perfume.

A fairy. I had seen him around. I decided to let go of him.

"Who are you, mister? No double talk."

He smoothed his jerkin where my manly fingers had rumpled it. Then he peered nervously out of the alley. There was no one in sight.

"There is no need for violence, Mr. Beowulf. My name is Aeschare. I work for Mr. Hrothgar."

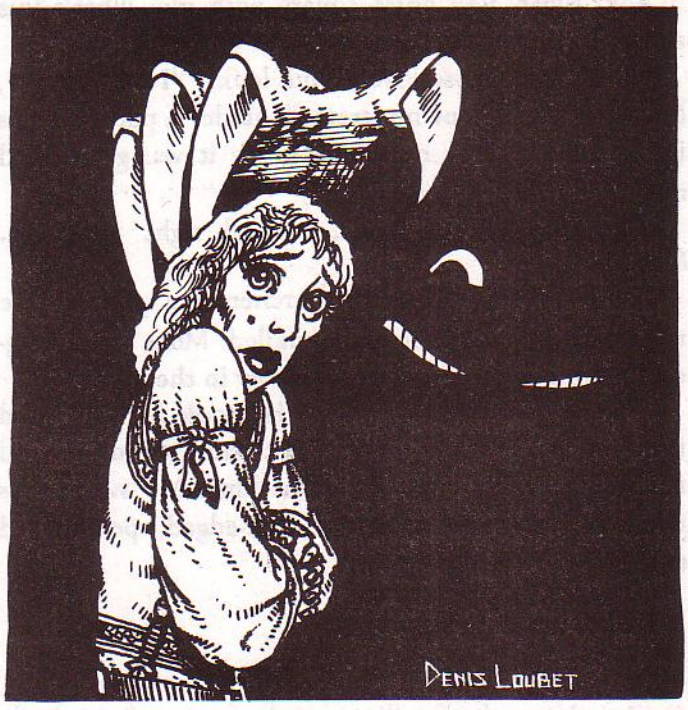
"So you try to shadow me. Well, this is going to put you in real solid with your boss."

"Please, Mr. Beowulf. There is no time for levity. I followed you because . . . because it is best we were not seen together. I happened to see your friend Miles last night. He was . . . ."

Just then I heard something moving down the street. I took a look around the corner. There was Blauhilde, looking casual, and surprised to see me.

I turned back to Aeschare. He was gone. I heard the patter of little fairy feet going out the other end of the alley.

Damn. Seems I couldn't even pick a dead-end alley any more. I must be losing my touch.



Just then, Blauhilde came and threw her arms around me. I could feel ribs cracking.

"Darling! What are you doing here? This neighborhood is *full* of fairies!"

"Take it easy. I'm on a case. Someone killed Miles. What do you know about it?"

"Why, nothing. He left me at my place and said he would come in the morning. When he didn't come, I went to your office, but there was no one there. And there was no one at your apartment, and the door was smashed in. Oh, Sam, I've been so worried!"

She tried to kiss me. Ever been kissed by a dragon? I don't recommend it. I ducked out the alley and said goodnight.

Tomorrow I would dig up Aeschare and get the truth from him. Right now, the epic was getting confusing and I needed to sleep.

The next day, I stopped by a pawn shop and picked a sword from the rack. Nothing fancy, just something to swagger around with until the police recovered my two-handed, double-edged, pearl-hilted sword.

I went by Hrothgar's. There was a crowd in front of the place. Odd, for this time of day. I pushed my way to the front.

The attraction was a dead fairy. Or the remains of one. Aeschare. Naturally. I recognized the rags of his doublet. Why couldn't he have stayed alive long enough to tell me something?

Looked like dragon work. You can tell. The claw marks and missing pieces are a dead giveaway.

I thought about it. First, my sword was stolen. Then someone killed Miles and tried to frame me. The local cops were out to get me. A fairy who knew too much was dead, apparently murdered by a dragon.

There were two dragons involved in this case, and one of them was telling me nothing but lies. But which one? The bimbo with the long blue hair, or the one with the cheap trinket from Malta?

What had Fafnir called the bimbo? Troll Wife. That reminded me of something . . . .

I swaggered through the marshes and mists on the South Side of Denmark. As I went along, I had to cut down some swamp vermin, and a bandit or two. Nothing special, just the usual for a low-rent district.

Ahead was my goal, Blauhilde's place. Typical – a big, black cave with a bunch of bones lying around. Chopping off the head of a swamp adder, I swaggered in.

"Blauhilde?" It was dark. On the walls were some cheap prints, a moth-eaten tapestry, and a two-handed, double-edged, pearl-hilted sword. My sword! That clinched it. All the pieces fit together now.

From the back of the cave came Blauhilde.

"Why, Sam, what are you doing here?"

"Your number is up. I'm through playing the sap, Blauhilde . . . or should I say Troll Wife?"

That shook her.

"You tried to set me up. First you handed me that phony yarn about a stolen treasure. Then you killed Miles. With my sword. There was a witness, so you killed him, too. But your game is over."

"Don't talk like that, Sam. Why would I want to frame you?"

"Don't give me that schoolgirl look. You're Grendel's mother. You wanted to get even with me for killing him – self defense, of course."

"Oh, Sam. Be kind to me. I love you, Sam."

She was breathing real hard, now, ogling me with those great, bloodshot eyes. But all the while, she was moving to get between me and the door. I realized I would have to kill her.

With my famous lightning draw, I had my sword out and heading for her midriff.

It broke. Damn cheap Saturday Night Special.

The dragon roared and reached for me with her claws.

But I knew how to handle the situation. I pulled the same trick I once used on a gang of Frisians who tried to jump me. I ran like hell.

In the haste of the moment, I forgot I was running deeper into the cave. There was no way out. I turned. And there it was. My two-handed, double-edged, pearl-hilted sword! In a flash it was in my hand.

Blauhilde was charging. She saw the sword, did a double-take, tripped, and impaled herself.

As her life's ichor oozed out onto the stone floor, she gasped, "Why, Sam?"

I said, "Sorry, sister. Somebody had to take the fall."

I was in my office, cleaning my two-handed, double-edged, pearl-hilted sword. There was a knock. In came a guy in mail and a white surcoat. I recognized the uniform of the Knights of Malta. Pretty tough outfit.

"What can I do for you?"

"The Knights of Malta are behind in their tribute to the Emperor Charles. We prepared a certain item for him, but it was stolen. We will pay 5,000 crowns for its recovery, no questions asked."

"That's a lot of money. What is this dingus?"

"A black falcon from Malta."

A falcon from Malta. Now . . . where had I heard that before?

EMPYREAN CHALLENGE

EMPYREAN . . . is defined as "the highest heavens". Control of a star cluster comprising 100 solar systems and 500 planets is the goal of this 150-player hidden-movement strategic science fiction game. For free details, send SASE to SUPERIOR SIMULATIONS, 524 Franklin Park Circle, Dept. SG1, Boise, ID 83709.

Sam Beowulf is, of course, Beowulf as a hard-boiled detective – Sam Spade or Mike Hammer. Not everyone will like Sam, but he would make a pleasant break after the umpteenth encounter with orcs. Sam would game out something like this:

TFT

Hero
ST 16, DX 12(9), IQ 9
Talents: Sword, Running, Literacy, Charisma, Warrior
(The two-handed, double-edged, pearl-hilted sword counts as a great sword with +2 hits for workmanship.)

D&D

Neutral Good Fighter, Level 4
STR 16, INT 9, WIS 6, DEX 12, CON 17, CHA 13
(The sword counts only as a two-handed sword. It is not magical.)

T&T

Warrior, Level 4
ST 17, IQ 9, LK 20, CON 18, DEX 14, CHR 13
(The sword is a mithril two-handed broadsword.)

If Sam should somehow stumble into the ***War of the Ring****, he would be Combat = 2, Morale = (4), Endurance = 6, Capture/Escape = 5/6. He would have no ring rating. (If he finds the ring, he turns it over to the local precinct.) The two-handed, double-edged, pearl-hilted sword counts as an elven sword.*

In a campaign, Sam would be found in a city, working as a private eye. There is a one-third chance he would be currently on a case. If he is not on a case, he may be employed by a character (given favorable reaction) for 10 g.p. a day, plus expenses. Sam is interested in private-eye work only. He will not become involved in any criminal enterprise, except with the intention of turning his "partners" over to the authorities. Sam will not willingly leave the area of the city where he works.

If Sam is on a case, he will not accept other employment, unless you can convince him your adventure is connected with the case. This is not particularly hard (considering his intelligence), but you can expect to get punched out when Sam discovers you've been playing him for a sap.

Sam is a tolerant person, but he has a -1 reaction to thieves and obvious underworld types. He will often conceal this reaction, however, to gain their confidence.

Sam is not really a tremendous hero, but his incredible luck will usually get him out of jams his low intelligence got him into. If he encounters some especially dire danger, he will use his secret tactic – running away.

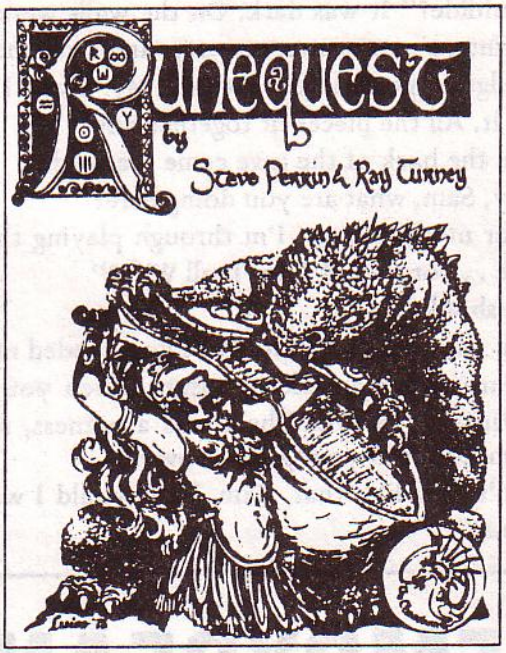
fantasy realism!

Ridiculous? No. *RuneQuest* is for thinking role-players interested in reliving the experiences in heroic literature and legend. The brave of the past had real lives and real problems; the *RuneQuest* system lets you know them in their reality. *RuneQuest* presents the most technically-accurate role-playing mechanics yet devised, legitimately simulating the great dramas of fantasy—they are not merely collected encounter and resolution systems.

RuneQuest's combat system was created by a charter member of the Society for Creative Anachronism, the organization devoted to playfully and truthfully exploring the realities of the past. No other FRP melee system was designed by someone with over 12 years of first-hand fighting with edged weapons and armor.

Runequest's magic system was patiently assembled by scholars and practicioners of real magic and the Old Religion. The guidelines for this system work alike for any magic users, whether they belong to an established religion (such as clerics) or are out for themselves (crafty wizards).

RuneQuest, time-tested and proven, is a game for role-players interested in discovering all the faces of fantasy, not just one inherited from medieval Europe. Try it and see!



RUNEQUEST $11.95, postpaid
second edition now in print

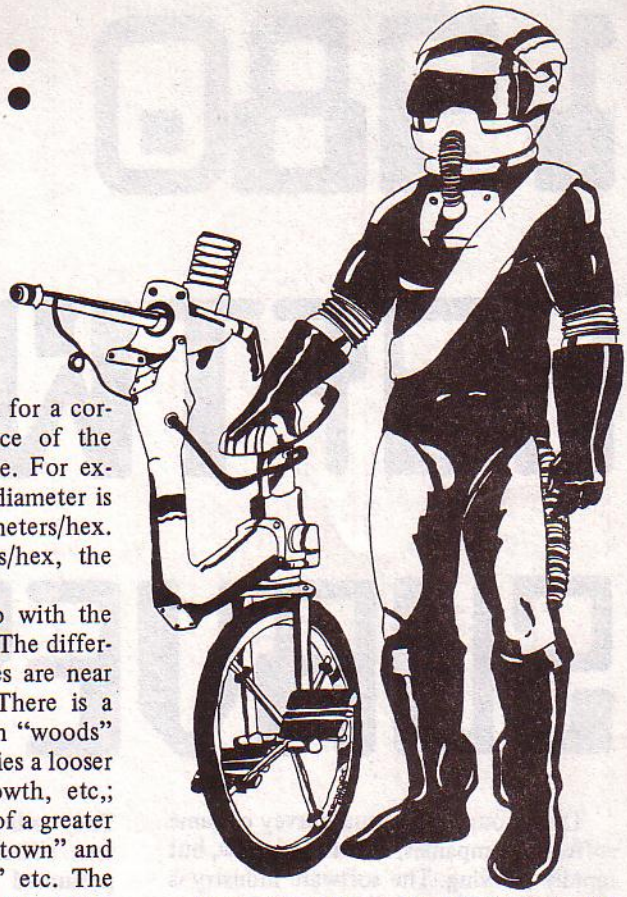
The Chaosium publishes over 20 titles of interest to role-players and boardgamers; write for free illustrated catalog. All items postpaid: California residents add appropriate 6/6.5% sales tax; non-USA gamers must order in U.S. funds. Prices good only in the USA. Prices subject to change without notice.

CHAOSIUM
Box 6302sg, Albany CA 94706

GAME DESIGN:
Theory and Practice

by Schuessler and Jackson

V: Terrain and Movement



Everything tends to inhibit movement except man-made tracks. A road is designed specifically to enhance movement. Everything else (even those "clear hexes") constitutes some kind of obstacle to optimal movement. There are certain freaky exceptions to this basic rule for those who feel compelled to quibble: salt flats and beaches, for example.

Terrain

Traditionally a great deal of simplification of terrain takes place in a wargame. In most cases, the number of terrain types rarely exceeds a half-dozen: clear, woods, rivers, towns, hills, swamp. When a small-scale map is used (1 : 1,000,000), there is a fair correlation between the game map and the source maps. However, where the level of play is operational or tactical and a large-scale map is used (1 : 50,000), this simplification creates some serious distortions. The half-dozen types of "standard" terrain don't even come close to representing the complexities of your city park – much less broad expanses of real countryside.

So we might say that the larger the scale, the more differentiation of terrain required. Sadly, until recently, the trend has been just the opposite; some tactical games had fewer terrain types than strategic level games. This "simplification" was mostly the result of a reluctance to write the necessary rules for complicated terrain. Line-of-sight is a good example. If you have five different levels of elevation, who can see whom from where gets sort of problematical. Add in some trees and houses, and your LOS rules begin to read like a physics textbook.

Militarily significant terrain is usually grouped into four categories:

- elevations: hills, slopes, mountains, cliffs, etc.
- foliage: woods, forests, scrub, undergrowth, crops, etc.
- man-made: villages, towns, dwellings, cities, etc.
- water: rivers, streams, lakes, swamps, bogs, etc.

For gaming purposes, we look for a correlation between the incidence of the terrain type and our hex scale. For example, a copse about 25m in diameter is important if the scale is 50 meters/hex. If the scale is 50 kilometers/hex, the copse is insignificant militarily.

A second factor has to do with the density of the terrain feature. The different examples in our categories are near synonomous, but not quite. There is a connotative difference between "woods" and "forest." The former implies a looser stand of trees, less undergrowth, etc,; the latter gives the impression of a greater obstacle. The same is true of "town" and "city," "river" and "stream," etc. The greater the density, the more severe effect on movement.

Who's on First?

Discussing classifications of real estate is only one side of determining refined movement. The other side is an analysis of who's doing the moving. Here we enter the wonderful world of tactical doctrine.

In various historical periods, the available weaponry pretty much decided how troops would move and deploy for battle. Prior to gunpowder, formations were tighter and more compacted, since the main weapons were only effective at close range – spears, swords, bows. From gunpowder to the machine gun, we see the range between opposing forces lengthen, but the formations themselves remain compact. With the machine gun (and the refinement of artillery use), the formations began to loosen. This dispersal was natural and necessary: a very small group of soldiers could generate a withering base of fire, and staying clumped together resulted in more casualties when the artillery connected.

The other factor that influences a given tactical doctrine is the organization of the supply train. Foraging sounds very romantic ("pillage," "rapine," and all that), but it usually just doesn't work. Even in the old days, living off the land was only feasible if you were moving constantly. Stopping for even a short time exhausted local resources.

With the arrival of gunpowder, the supply train took on a much greater importance. You might be able to scrounge food, but powder and shell just can't be had from the local peasantry. And in modern warfare, logistics has mushroomed to where no army can survive without the supply train. Not surprisingly, as the supply train becomes more important, it also becomes more efficient.

So, when it comes to calculating movement, we have a number of seemingly disparate factors to consider. In the old days, the base movement was very slow. Most of the troops were travelling on their feet, and even those lucky enough to be mounted usually couldn't stray too far from the foot-sloggers. The supply train was primitive, which meant that it wasn't absolutely essential, except when the armies found themselves stationary for a long period of time. When the battle finally got going, the two sides formed themselves up in mob-fashion. Once formed, their mobility was further reduced.

In modern times (late World War I and forward), everything moves much faster. Troops are transported in trucks and AFV; they deploy and fight in a matter of hours. The supply train is also mobile and absolutely essential to sustain the pace.

Next month: More on movement.

1980 GAME SOFTWARE SURVEY

BY FORREST JOHNSON AND ALAN ISABELLE

This is our first annual survey of game software companies. The field is new, but rapidly growing. The software industry is going through a shaking-out process rather like the auto industry in the first half of this century. The industry is still dominated by small, rather disorganized companies, whose products vary greatly in quality and price.

Confusion is common. Have you played *Star Trek*? Which one? *Lunar Lander*? Which one? *Adventure*? Which one? *Flight Simulator*? Which one?

Even old hands can get bewildered by the variety of programs available. Neither the price of the program nor the size of the marketing company gives a reliable indication of the quality of a program. Surprises, pleasant and otherwise, may be found anywhere.

We asked some of our regular contributors which companies to survey. Unfortunately, we could find no addresses for some of the suggested companies, others no longer existed, and still others did not return our questionnaires. To be on the safe side, we sent forms to several companies which no one had suggested.

In the end, survey forms were sent to 25 companies. Follow-up forms were sent to companies which did not respond to the first mailing. Questionnaires have been quoted directly where appropriate.

In this survey, we have limited ourselves to software distributors. A list of software designers would soon exceed our available RAM.

Most of the companies listed are software companies, not game companies. They sell such things as compilers and text editors, besides games. It may be presumed that all the listed companies market their products through retailers. Where a company also sells by mail, it is noted.

AARDVARK TECHNICAL SERVICES, 1690 Bolton, Walled Lake, MI 48088; 313-624-6316. Founded 1977. Owner and chief programmer: Rodger Olsen. Buys outside programs; 20-25% royalty. Sells by mail; catalog available.

Aardvark specializes in programs for OSI computers, 4-12K; cassettes and floppy disks. Prices range $5.95-19.95.

"I am a gamemaster (and psychologist) who started as a hobbyist in 1977. I wanted real games of *Risk* and *Blitzkrieg* quality on a small computer. Hobby has turned into a full-time business."

Among the better games are *Fighter Pilot, Starfighter,* and Bob Retelle's *Time Trek.*

AUTOMATED SIMULATIONS, INC., POB 4247, Mountain View, CA 94040; 415-964-8021. Founded 1978. Owner: corporation. Designers: Jon Freeman, J.W. Connelly, and Norm Lane. Has not yet bought an outside program, "but may do so in the future." Sells by mail; catalog available.

Automated Simulations sells programs for the Apple II, TRS-80 Level II and the PET, 8-48K; cassettes for all three, disks for the Apple and TRS-80 only. Prices range $14.95-29.95.

Automated Simulations produces seven games, all quite popular. Titles include *Starfleet Orion* (reviewed in issue 30) and *Rescue at Rigel.* The company's *DunjonQuest* series is reviewed in this issue (see Capsule Reviews).

(Incidentally, Carlston's *Galactic Empire,* wrongly attributed to Automated Simulations in issue 30, is available from The Program Store.)

BTC PRODUCTS, 127 Ridgeland Rd., Wilmington, DE 19803. Founded 1980. Owners and designers: Bruce Beutel and Tim Ihde. Does not buy outside programs. Sells by mail; no catalog.

BTC produces programs for the TRS-80, 14-16K; cassettes and disks. Prices range $12.95-15.00.

BTC is a new company, with three games for sale and two in development. Titles include *Tomb of Terror* and *Super Galactic Battles.*

CREATIVE COMPUTING, POB 789-M, Morristown, NJ 07960. Founded 1978. Owner: David Ahl. Buys outside designs; royalty 10-15% of list price. Sells by mail; catalog free.

Creative Computing (which also owns the magazine) sells software for the Apple II, TRS-80, PET, SOL-20, and CP/M 4-48K; cassettes and disks.

Creative Computing sells over 400 programs, including the Scott Adams *Adventure* series, and also *Lunar Lander, Rocket Pilot,* the "original" *Adventure* and the "original" *Wumpus.*

DYNACOMP, 6 Rippingale Road, Pitsford, NY 14534; 716-586-7579. Owners and programmers: Arthur M. Walsh and Frederick R. Ruckdeschel. Buys outside programs; royalty 15-25% of gross receipts. Sells by mail; catalog free.

Dynacomp sells programs for the Apple II, TRS-80, Atari, PET, and North Star, 16-24K; cassettes for all five, disks for the North Star only. Prices range $9.95-19.95.

Dynacomp does have a *Startrek* program, but *Chess Master* and *Flight Simulator* are more typical.

EDU-WARE SERVICES, INC., 22035 Burbank Blvd., Suite 223; 213-784-5736. Founded 1979. Owners: Sherwin A. Steffin and Steven W. Pederson. Programmers: Steffin, Pederson, and David G. Mullich. Buys outside programs "occasionally." Sells by mail; catalog available.

Edu-Ware specializes in programs for the Apple II and Apple II Plus, 32-48K; cassettes and disks. Prices range $9.95-39.95. Edu-Ware offers a 120-day warranty against "everything but physical abuse." Also, there is a perpetual update policy, which allows the buyer to exchange his old program for a new version when it appears.

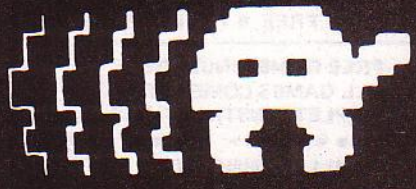
Four Edu-Ware programs are reviewed in this issue (see Capsule Reviews).

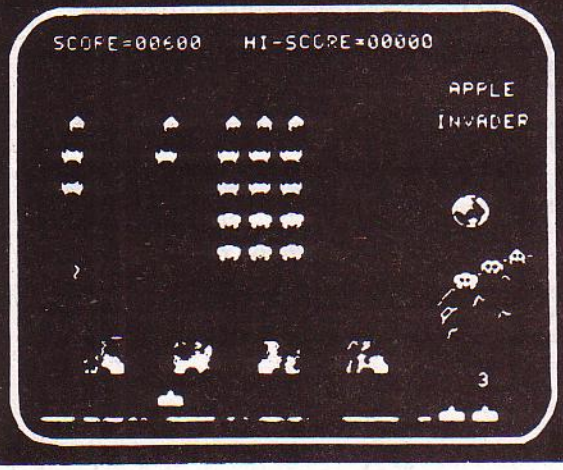
SPACE WAR

You're in command in **SPACE WAR!** Destroy your opponent's ship by forcing him to collide with the sun or to explode upon re-entry from hyperspace. . . or challenge him face to face with missile fire. You're in command of the speed and direction of your ship. You control the timing of your missiles. You select the game mode from five options, including Reverse Gravity, and the battle begins. . . Accelerate to place your shots--and escape into hyperspace before your opponent comes within range. But be wary, he (or she!) may circle out of sight and reappear on the opposite side of the galaxy! (This is the classic MIT game redesigned especially for the Apple.)

and SUPER INVASION

- **Super Invasion** is the original invasion game, with the original moon creatures and faster action than any other invasion game.
- Features superb high resolution graphics, nail-biting tension and hilarious antics by the moon creatures!
- Self-running "attract mode" of operation for easy learning and demonstrating of the game.
- As good in every way as the famous Invaders arcade game.
- High speed action ! • Sound effects!
- Runs on the Apple II and the Apple II Plus





Fifty-five aliens advance and shower you with lethal writhing electric worms. As you pick off the aliens, one-by-one, they quicken their descent. They whiz across the screen wearing away your parapets, your only defense, coming closer and closer to your level. **Super Invasion** is the **original** invasion game with the original moon creatures and faster action than any other invasion game on the market.

Super Invasion is available for only $19.95 on cassette (CS-4006) for a 32K Apple II. **Space War** is $14.95 on cassette (CS-4009) for a 16K Apple II. **Space War** and **Super Invasion** are on one disk (CS-4508) for a 48K Apple II for only $29.95.

Send payment plus $1.00 shipping and handling to Creative Computing Software, P.O. Box 789-M, Morristown, NJ 07960. NJ residents add $1.00 sales tax. Bankcard orders may be called in toll free to 800/631-8112. In NJ call 201/540-0445.

sensational software

creative computing software

FANTASY GAMES SOFTWARE, POB 1683, Madison, WI 53701. Founded 1978. Owners and programmers: P. O'Donovan and J. Pietenpol. Buys outside programs; royalty. Sells by mail; catalog available.

FGS specializes in software for the PET, 8K; cassettes only. The two available programs – *Swordquest* and *Escape from the Death Planet* – have been much praised. Both cost $12.95.

INSTANT SOFTWARE, Peterborough, NH 03458; 603-924-7296. Founded 1978. Owner: Wayne Green. Buys outside programs; royalty 20% of net receipts. (The company provides, free, a helpful guide to selling programs.) Sells by mail; catalog free.

Instant Software markets programs for the Apple, TRS-80, PET, Heath, and TI 99/4, 4-48K; cassettes and disks. Prices range $7.95-199.95. (The games are at the lower end of the scale.)

Instant Software sells over 300 programs, mostly business software. Games include *Airmail Pilot* and *Santa Paravia and Fiumaccio*, both designed for the 16K TRS-80 Level II.

MICROCOMPUTER GAMES, INC. (subsidiary of The Avalon Hill Game Company), 4517 Harford Rd., Baltimore, MD 21214; 301-254-5300. Parent company founded 1958. Owner: Nationwide Diversified Corporation. Designers: Donald Greenwood, Alan Moon, Mick Uhl, Richard Hamlin, Bruce Milligan, and Frank Davis. Does not buy outside programs. Sells by mail; catalog 50 cents.

Microcomputer Games produces programs for the Apple II, TRS-80, and PET, 16K; cassettes only. Price each: $15.00.

Most of our readers are familiar with the name Avalon Hill. (For more information, see the game publishers survey in issue 28.) There are five titles for computers: *B-1 Nuclear Bomber, Midway Campaign, North Atlantic Convoy Raider, Nukewar,* and *Planet Miners.* AH has taken the unusual step of enclosing software for three computers in every box. Only time will tell how well this approach works.

PERSONAL SOFTWARE INC., 1330 Bordeaux Dr., Sunnyvale, CA 94086; 408-745-7841. Founded 1977. Owners: "stockholders – privately held." Buys outside programs; payment varies. Sells through retailers only; catalog available.

Personal Software sells programs for the Apple II, TRS-80, and PET, 4-16K; cassettes and disks. Prices range $15.00-24.00.

"Personal Software was founded as a Harvard Business School project and has mushroomed into one of the top software publishing firms in the United States. Currently there are three lines: the Productivity Series (for business), VitaFacts Series (educational) and Strategy Game Series."

Personal Software markets Joshua Lavinsky's *Time Trek*, reviewed in issue 28.

POWERSOFT INC., POB 157, Pitman, NJ 08071; 609-589-5500. Founded 1977. Owners: "23 stockholders." Buys outside designs; royalty 20% of gross receipts. Sells by mail; catalog available.

Powersoft specializes in programs for the Apple, 16-48K; cassettes or disks. Prices range $9.95-24.95.

A review of Powersoft's *Galactic Empires* is featured in this issue. Other noteworthy games include *Space Maze* and *Wampus Hunt.* Unfortunately, Powersoft's adventure game, *World of Odyssey*, is slow and does not recommend itself.

PROGRAMMA INTERNATIONAL, INC., 3400 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90010; 213-384-0579. Founded 1979. Owners: Verne Kallejian, David Gordon, and Mel Norell. Programmers: Robert Baizer, Harry L. Tarnoff Jr., Ralph Burris, Mike Richter, Mark Siegel, Randall Hyde, William Robinson, and others. Buys outside programs, royalty 20% of collected sales. Sells by mail; catalog $1.00.

Programma markets software for Apple II, TRS-80, Atari, PET, and Exidy, 16-48K; cassettes and disks. Prices range $6.95-24.95.

Programma's 80-page catalog includes many fine game programs. Among the best is *Battlestar I*, a 32K cassette in Integer Basic for the Apple II.

THE PROGRAM STORE, 4200 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20016; 800-424-2738. Founded 1978. Owner: Ray Daly. Buys outside programs. Sells by mail; three catalogs available, depending on computer.

The Program Store sells programs for the Apple, TRS-80, and Atari; cassettes and disks. Prices range $9.95-199.00.

The Program Store is a distributor which markets a number of well-known games, including Automated Simulations' *DunjonQuest*, Instant Software's *Airmail Pilot*, and Carlston's *Galactic Empire.*

DON'T WAIT TILL THE YEAR 2000!!!
FUTURE GAMING IS HERE!!

THE SENSATIONAL BEST SELLING TRS-80 COMPUTER
INCLUDES: 16K MEMORY (16000 CHARACTERS!), LEVEL II BASIC, TAPE STORAGE
LOCAL STORE PRICE $849.00!
OUR SPECIAL PRICE TO YOU $774.00! SAVE $75!
(EXPANDABLE TO 48K, 4 DISK DRIVES, TELEPHONE MODEMS, FORTRAN AND MORE!!!

FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE
FREE • *5 FANTASTIC SPACE GAMES WITH THE PURCHASE OF THE TRS-80!* • FREE
FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE

FREE GAMES INCLUDE →
ALL GAMES COME WITH COMPLETE INSTRUCTIONS
◆ ■ ● ★ → ← ★ ● ■ ◆
WILL GAMING EVER BE THE SAME???
◆ ■ ● ★ → ← ★ ● ■ ◆
WILL ANYTHING BE THE SAME AGAIN???

GRAPHIC TREK 2000: An exciting computer graphics game that pits you and the Enterprise against the Klingon menace! 3 Skill Levels!

INVASION WORG: The Year: 2300 – The Enemy: Worg – The Place: Earth's Solar System Mission: Stop the invading Worg menace before they destroy Earth!

SPACE TARGET: An exciting graphic game of skill. Can you destroy the invading saucers with your galactic artillery??

SAUCERS: An arcade graphics game of manual co-ordination. A fantastic space flighter simulation!

STAR WARS: Who'd win in a real space battle? You or the dreaded Darth Vader?? Find out how good you are!

In 1975 there was no such thing as a "Personal Computer"! Times change!! The TRS-80 is not only changing the world of games and simulations but the traditional roles of education, business, and personal finance!! Don't be left behind. The Future is here. The time for personal computing is NOW!!

Our TRS-80 has a full Radio Shack warranty. Service is only as far as your local Radio Shack store or dealer. Why buy at full retail when you can get all the benefits at $75 cheaper and 5 great simulations free!!

We accept VISA, MASTERCARD, Checks, and Money Orders. **FAST DELIVERY** Please send_____ TRS-80 16K LVII Computer(s) at $774 each. Plus $10 for postage and handling ($784 total). I understand that the Computer has the full warranty and that there are thousands of other programs available!!

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State_____ Zip_____
Credit Card No. _____ Expiration_____

PLEASE SEND ORDERS TO:
SIMUTEK
P.O. Box 13687-T
Tucson, AZ 85732

Phone orders accepted any time. Day – (602) 885-7026. Night – (602) 886-5880.
We also have expansion interfaces, color graphics kits, disk drives, software programs and other add ons, at great discounts!!
◆ ■ ● ★ → **CALL US! WE'LL BEAT ANYONES PRICES!!** ← ★ ● ■ ◆

RAINBOW COMPUTING, INC., 9719 Reseda Blvd., Northridge, CA 91324; 213-349-5560. Founded 1976. Owners: "7 owners." Buys outside programs; royalty 50% of wholesale price. Sells by mail; catalog available.

Rainbow sells programs for the Apple and Atari, 16-48K; cassettes and disks. Prices range $6.95-59.95.

Rainbow markets a number of enjoyable games. Among the better ones – *Devil's Dungeon, Adventure,* and *Warlords.*

SIMUTEK, POB 35298, Tuscon, AZ 85740; 602-882-3948. Sells by mail; catalog available.

Simutek did not return our questionnaire. The company sells six "packages" (several games on the same cassette or disk) for the TRS-80 Level II. The cassette version requires 16K and costs $12.95. The disk requires 32K and costs $5.00 extra.

Some of these programs go together rather poorly, for example *The Electric Artist* is in the same package as *Galactic Battles.*

THE SOFTWARE EXCHANGE, 6 South St., Milford, NH 03055; 603-673-5144. Founded 1977. Owner: Roger/Bette Robitaille. Buys outside programs. Sells by mail; catalog $1.00.

The Software Exchange markets programs for the Apple, TRS-80, Atari, and PET, 4-64K; cassettes and disks. Prices range $7.95-395.00.

Like The Program Store, this is a distributor with a great variety of programs available. Titles include Lavinsky's *Time Trek,* Carlston's *Galactic Empire,* and Automated Simulation's *Starfleet Orion.* The Software Exchange also sells the much-praised chess program, *Sargon* and its descendant, *Sargon II.*

STRATAGEMS COMPANY, POB 786, Taylor, MI 48180. Founded 1979. Owners and designers: Gary Garcia and Michael Lospinuso. Buys outside programs; royalty 10% of retail sales. Sells by mail; catalog free.

The only Stratagems product of which we have knowledge is *Starcruiser,* a 16K cassette for the TRS-80 Level II, which sells for $10.00. (*Starcruiser* was reviewed in issue 30.)

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS INC., 450 San Antonio Road, Palo Alto, CA 94306; 415-494-0557. Founded 1979. Owners: "Privately owned by about 15 stockholders." Programmers: John Lyon, Ep Williger, and Joel Billings. Buys outside designs. Sells by mail; catalog to be published in October.

"SSI was started in August 1979 to create complicated wargames for computers, after deciding on the *Bismarck* as the topic of the first computer wargame. Six months later, the game was done, and work on *Computer Ambush* began. With luck we will have over 5 games available by the end of 1980."

Computer Bismarck and *Computer Ambush* are both available for the Apple II and TRS-80; 32K cassette, 48K disk. The cassette version costs $49.95, the disk $59.95.

SSI's two games are historical, with strong appeal to traditional gamers. They are quite expensive, but they have won plenty of praise. *Computer Bismarck* was reviewed in issue 29. *Computer Ambush,* a game similar to *Sniper,* drew crowds at Origins 80. A lot of people are looking forward to the three forthcoming games.

* * *

If your favorite game software company is not mentioned here . . . let us know! We'll include it in our next survey.

Be A Hero!

Cross swords with a band of dastardly robbers in their mountain lair in the **Datestones of Ryn.** You explore the caverns shown on your video display and vanquish the monsters in real time. You have just 20 minutes to recover the precious Datestones before time itself stops.

Monsters—Melees—Magic!

The **Datestones of Ryn** introduces you to the superlative DUNJONQUEST game system. Other games in the series may pit you against an evil wizard or the frightful insectoid monsters of the god Apshai. In the **Datestones** your main opponents are human, but look out for other nasty critters lurking in the darkness. You have 14 different commands ranging from moving (as fast or as slow as you like so long as you don't tire yourself out) to searching the walls for secret doors.

For just $14.95 you get the **Datestones of Ryn** on cassette ready to play, and a superbly illustrated booklet that tells you all about the game. Please specify the version you want—TRS-80 (Level II, 16K), PET (16K old or new ROMS), or APPLE (32K Applesoft).

Ask your dealer or send today to:

AUTOMATED SIMULATIONS
Dept. DD3
P.O. Box 4247
Mountain View, CA.94040

California residents please add 6% sales tax.

When was the last time you commanded a Warp Force? Maybe you would rather administer the Empire or be a diplomat to alien civilizations? To win at WARP FORCE ONE you must be able to do all three!

WARP FORCE ONE is a computer-moderated correspondence game. The cost is only $2 per turn; turns will be mailed every two weeks. Rendezvous now with fifteen other players from all over the nation for an exciting game of WARP FORCE ONE!

For a rules booklet please send $1 to:

Emprise Game Systems
P.O. Box 2225
Houston, TX 77001

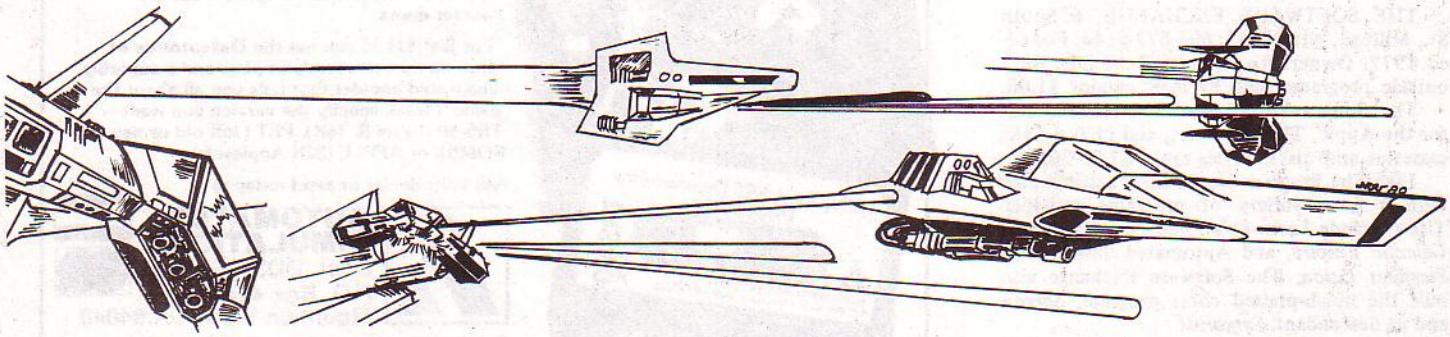
Emprise Game Systems

FEATURED REVIEW

GALACTIC EMPIRES

by Bruce Webster

I must confess to a feeling of disappointment when I received my copy of GALACTIC EMPIRES in the mail. There were no rules, no documentation, no fancy flyers or covers . . . just a cassette protected by a piece of cardboard, all enclosed in a plain manila envelope. My expectations were lowered further by my unsuccessful attempts to load the program using the two tape recorders at my disposal. The ultimate solution was a trip to the local computer store (whose tape recorders inexplicably succeed when mine don't) to copy the program onto a floppy disk. So when I finally sat down that evening and started the game, I didn't expect much.



Boy, was I surprised.

Now, don't get me wrong. GALACTIC EMPIRES doesn't have intricate graphics (though it does have excellent sound effects), nor does it have detailed rules, complex options, or extensive information readouts. So don't rush out to buy it expecting any of these attributes. Instead, rush out to buy it because it is (1) playable, (2) exciting, and (3) FUN! It is one of the five best computer games and easily the best multi-player computer game I've ever seen. While you're digesting that rash statement, I'll tell you about the game itself.

GALACTIC EMPIRES pits 1-20 (yes, 20!) players against each other for control of a group of stars set on a 20 x 20 grid. At the start of the game, the players specify the number of players, the number of stars (5 to 40, though there must be at least one star per player) and the number of game turns in the game (1-100, though this can be changed during the game). The stars are then randomly placed on the grid (this step can be repeated if you don't like the setup) and information on each internally generated. Each player is then assigned a star (his home world) and given roughly 100 ships (adjusted according to how advantageously located his home world is). All other worlds are considered neutral and will (by option) either build defending fleets or be left defenseless. Each world has a production capacity that determines how many ships it will produce each game turn – home worlds always produce 10 and the production capacities of the rest range from 0 to 13 (highest observed so far). Uncontrolled neutral worlds do not produce ships unless the "defending fleets" option is chosen, in which case they build their defending fleets at their production rate, which means that the most valuable worlds are the hardest to capture.

Each game turn consists of three phases: launch fleets, move fleets, and resolve combat. During the "launch fleets" phase, each player may send ships from any world he or she controls toward any other world. Secrecy is preserved by not echoing the players' moves back on the screen (they each take turns at the keyboard in a random order determined by the computer). During this phase any player may also execute the Help function which allows the player(s) to view the star map or the world data, to (personally) quit the game, to end the game for everyone, or to change the number of game turns in the game.

After everyone has entered their fleet orders, all ships being launched or in transit are moved by the computer (the "move fleets" phase). Movement is basically hidden: no ships in transit are ever seen, but the world data display shows the number of ships on each world at the end of the last turn, so you can tell when ships are in transit – you just can't tell where they're going to. Each ship (or fleet thereof) moves two grid squares the turn it's launched, and three squares each turn thereafter. Once a fleet is launched, it cannot be influenced or even detected until it has reached its destination.

Now comes the "combat resolution" phase. If any fleet has reached its destination, it must contend with any enemy ships waiting. The defending fleet (i.e., any fleet already at the world) gets first shot – one for each ship defending. The odds of hitting are apparently based on how many ships you're shooting at (the more the better). If there are any attacking ships left after that initial salvo, they get to fire back. The cycle is repeated until only one side's ships are left. If more than one fleet arrives at a system during a game turn, the arrivals are NOT simultaneous but are handled in some computer-determined order. All of this is

automatic – and noisy! After the dust settles, a revised world data display is put up, and a new game turn starts. The whole process continues until the specified number of game turns elapses, at which point the player or players controlling the greatest number of worlds is (are) declared to be the winner(s).

The game, while simple, is not simplistic. You must be careful not to stretch yourself too thin or leave yourself unprotected – and yet you can't just sit around and let everyone else gather up all the neutral worlds. Fleet strength must be chosen carefully when attacking a world, since the defender has an edge. I've found that you need to attack with roughly half again as many ships as are defending the world you wish to capture to be sure of success. Sending small fleets to harrass well-defended worlds is foolish, since the attacking fleet will probably be wiped out without ever firing a shot. This means that you can't just send several small fleets to attack a world; you need to gather them into one large fleet on a world you control and then send them off – something which your opponents will certainly spot. World position can be critical because of the slow movement rate – capturing a world on the other side of the starmap is entertaining, but you'll have a hard time defending it because of the delay in sending reinforcements. All in all, the game is reminiscent of a cross between *Stellar Conquest* and *Risk*.

There is (in my opinion) only one real problem with GALACTIC EMPIRES: a game in progress cannot be saved and continued later. I am working on a solution to this, and the game's author, Dr. Tom Cleaver of Ursine Engineering, has said they may come out with a new, disk-based version with that option. A minor problem is the quality of the cassette the game comes on. Powersoft, the distributor, has a reputation for using less-than-adequate cassettes, and you may have some problems loading the game in. Solution: visit your local computer store and see if they'll copy it onto a better cassette or a floppy disk for you.

My recommendation to anyone owning an Apple II with at least 16K of RAM and Applesoft in RAM or ROM (which should mean 90% of all Apple owners) is to get this game. At $9.95, it is an incredible bargain.

GALACTIC EMPIRES (Powersoft, Inc., P.O. Box 157, Pitman, NJ 08071); $9.95. Written by Tom Cleaver. Cassette tape for Apple II with 16K and Applesoft in RAM or ROM. For one to twenty players; playing time ten minutes to ten (or more) hours. Published 1979.

The Fantasy Trip

is killing monsters, finding treasure, braving danger, joining quests, conjuring magic, and exploring the unknown the romance and mystery life should be. THE FANTASY TRIP frees your imagination for an evening of fun and adventure. It's the role-playing game for the 80's the one you've waited for.

Rules are well structured, logically related, and easy to learn. Designed as a series of inexpensive, regularly published rules modules, THE FANTASY TRIP will stay exciting for years. This is the new standard in role-playing, the next generation in the evolution of the genre.

* IN THE LABYRINTH is the first Game Master's module. It lets you create worlds and guide characters on adventures. Included are Hero Talents and copiable play aids. You will need MicroGame No. 3 THE FANTASY TRIP: MELEE and MicroGame No. 6 THE FANTASY TRIP: WIZARD, or the expanded modules THE FANTASY TRIP: ADVANCED MELEE and THE FANTASY TRIP: ADVANCED WIZARD for playing magic and combat. *$4.95 02-1-002*

* ADVANCED MELEE expands MELEE's basic combat system. New material includes aiming, aerial combat, water combat, critical hits mounts and some new options. If you want more reality and rules for new situations, this is for you. *$4.95 02-1-003*

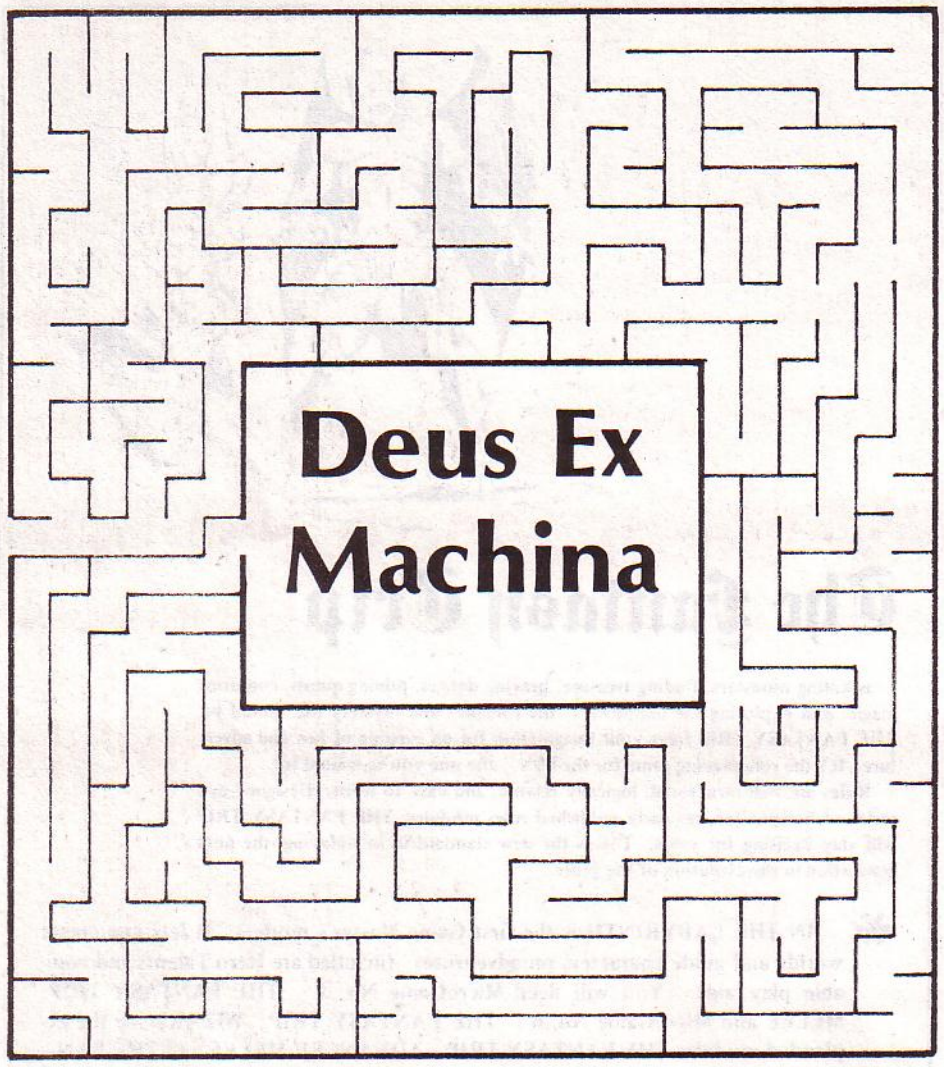
* ADVANCED WIZARD expands WIZARD's basic magic system into a complete guide to adventure magic. New material include a series of higher IQ spells, alchemy, and magic items. This greatly expanded module is just the thing for masters of the wizardly arts. *$4.95 02-1-004*

* TOLLENKAR'S LAIR is a ready-to-play labyrinth. Game Master's are provided with maps, mapping notes, background, and instructions necessary for a series of adventures. IN THE LABYRINTH and a combat and magic module are necessary for play. *$2.95 02-2-001*

Allow three to six weeks for delivery, USA and Canada only. Send check or money order, plus $.50 postage to:

Metagaming

Box 15346-TSG, Austin, TX 78761



This month instead of Bruce Webster's regular column, we have a special guest column on maze generation by Joseph Power of East Lansing, Michigan.

Maze Generation Made Simple

Many role players are excited about the use of personal computers in their games. This is reasonable because the computer can allow incredible complexity to be easily managed, allowing the gamemaster to concentrate on the role-playing aspects of his campaign instead of the mechanics. To use a computer in this manner, you need algorithms to implement functions like character generation, combat resolution, random number production, etc. This article presents a simple algorithm for generating random mazes that have at least one path through them. This method is one that I currently use to generate dungeons with much the same flavor as Metagaming's *Death Test.* Rather than present a listing of a Basic program, I will try to explain the procedure in a manner that will be language independent.

When trying to generate a maze with at least one path from end to end, there are two major problems that must be solved. There must be at least one path or connection between each row of the maze and every room must be connected to at least one other room. Also, the method to accomplish this should be quick and simple.

Start with a square array (also known as a matrix). Find the smallest whole number that is greater than (not equal to) half the length of the array. Now randomly pick this number of rooms in each row. Connect all rooms in a row, and only those that are directly adjacent between rows. Choose one room in the top row as the entrance and one in the last row as the exit. You have now generated the maze.

Since pictures illustrate better than words, I will repeat the procedure graphically. Begin with a square array:

	1	2	3	4	5
1	.	.	.	.	.
2	.	.	.	.	.
3	.	.	.	.	.
4	.	.	.	.	.
5	.	.	.	.	.

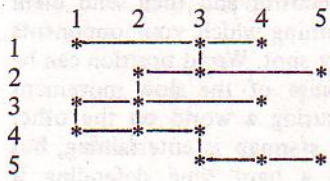
(The array can be any size; 5 was chosen for this example but I could have used 108 if I wanted to.)

Now compute the number of rooms for each row. In this case the number is 3 because 5/2 is 2.5 and the smallest whole number greater than 2.5 is 3. If the array was 4 by 4, the number would still be 3, but if it was 6 by 6, the number would be 4. Randomly pick this number of rooms (with no duplications) in each row:

	1	2	3	4	5
1	*		*	*	
2		*	*		*
3	*	*		*	
4	*	*	*		
5			*	*	*

(The asterisks represent the randomly chosen rooms. Note that there are three asterisks in each row.)

Connect all rooms in a row, and those rooms that are vertically adjacent:



(The lines represent connections between rooms and are called corridors. The longer the line, the longer the corridor.)

Now pick one of the three rooms from the first row (the choices chosen for this dungeon are 1, 3, and 4 – let's go with 4) as the entrance and one of the three from the last two (let's say 3) as the exit. You now have a maze with one entrance, one exit, and (in this case) two paths through it.

The reason this method insures that there will be at least one path through the maze is found in the number of rooms you place in each row. Because all rooms in a row are connected, you can always go from any room in a row to any other room in the same row. Because one more than half the locations in a row are chosen as rooms, there will always be at least one set of rooms vertically adjacent between any two rows. This means that you can always travel from any row to any other row and thus from one room to any other.

While the example shown does not produce a masterpiece dungeon, with larger arrays, the results do improve. I once generated a 32 by 32 dungeon with this method (544 rooms total) and it was very impressive.

If this isn't your copy of THE SPACE GAMER . . . you can use this card to subscribe. Charge your subscription to Visa or Mastercard!

Please send me *The Space Gamer* for (circle applicable rate):

	U.S. Addresses	Canadian & other foreign addresses SURFACE	Outside North America AIR	
One year	US$ 21.00	US$ 24.00	US$ 41.00	
Two years	US$ 39.00	US$ 45.00	US$ 79.00	
Lifetime subscription	US$ 250.00	US$ 260.00	varies	$.....

If this is a resubscription, please check here ( )

Payment is by ( ) check ( ) money order ( ) credit card. Total enclosed: .....
ALL PAYMENTS MUST BE IN U.S. DOLLARS

Name . . . . . .
Address. . . . . .
City. . . . . .
State/Province. . . . . Zip. . . . . .

CHARGE MY MASTERCARD ..... *CHARGE MY VISA .....*

Account number . . . . . .
Card expires . . . . . .
Signature. . . . . .

If you are charging your subscription to Mastercard or Visa, just put a stamp on this card and mail it. If you are paying by check or money order, please put the check and this card in an envelope and send to the address on the other side.

If this isn't your copy of THE SPACE GAMER . . . you can use this card to subscribe. Charge your subscription to Visa or Mastercard!

.....

.....

.....

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

THE SPACE GAMER

Box 18805-T

Austin, TX 78760

If this isn't your copy of THE SPACE GAMER . . . you can use this card to subscribe. Charge your subscription to Visa or Mastercard!

Please send me *The Space Gamer* for (circle applicable rate):

	U.S. Addresses	Canadian & other foreign addresses SURFACE	Outside North America AIR	
One year	US$ 21.00	US$ 24.00	US$ 41.00	
Two years	US$ 39.00	US$ 45.00	US$ 79.00	
Lifetime subscription	US$ 250.00	US$ 260.00	varies	$.....

If this is a resubscription, please check here ( )

Payment is by ( ) check ( ) money order ( ) credit card. Total enclosed: .....
ALL PAYMENTS MUST BE IN U.S. DOLLARS

Name . . . . . .
Address. . . . . .
City. . . . . .
State/Province. . . . . Zip. . . . . .

CHARGE MY MASTERCARD ..... *CHARGE MY VISA* .....

Account number . . . . . .
Card expires . . . . . .
Signature. . . . . .

If you are charging your subscription to Mastercard or Visa, just put a stamp on this card and mail it. If you are paying by check or money order, please put the check and this card in an envelope and send to the address on the other side.

If this isn't your copy of THE SPACE GAMER . . . you can use this card to subscribe. Charge your subscription to Visa or Mastercard!

.....

.....

.....

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

THE SPACE GAMER

Box 18805-T

Austin, TX 78760

Creative Computing can help you select the best computer and get the most out of it.

With so many new personal computers being announced and the prices coming down so rapidly, isn't the best bet to wait a year or so to buy a system?

We think not. A pundit once observed that there are three kinds of people in the world: 1) those who make things happen, 2) those who watch things happen and 3) those who wonder what happened. Today, it is those who are getting involved with microcomputers who are making things happen by learning to use computers effectively.

Furthermore, it is not likely that we will see the same dramatic price declines in future years that have already taken place. Rather, one will be able to get more capability for the same price.

The TI-99/4 has excellent color graphics and costs $1150 including color TV monitor.

Which system is for you?

No two people have exactly the same needs. You'll have to determine what capabilities are important to you. Key variables include:

- Upper and lower case. Obviously vital if you are planning to do word processing or anything with text output.
- Graphics. Most systems have graphics but the resolution varies widely. How much do you really need?
- Color. Some systems are B&W, some have 4 colors, others up to 256 colors. Many colors sounds nice, but do you really need 4, or 16, or more?
- Mass storage. The smaller systems are cassette based; larger systems offer floppy disks or even hard disks. What size data bases do you intend to use and is it important to have high-speed random access to an entire data base?
- Languages. Basic is standard but increasingly Pascal, Fortran, Cobol and special purpose languages are being offered.
- Audio, Speech, Music. Are these features important for your planned applications?
- Applications Software. Third party software is widely available for some systems, non-existent for others. Do you need this, or can you write your own?

Unbiased, in-depth evaluations.

At Creative Computing, we obtain new systems as soon as they are announced. We put them through their paces in our Software Center and also in the environment for which they are intended — home, business, or school. We published the first in-depth evaluations of the Texas Instruments 99/4, Atari 800, TRS-80, Ohio Scientific Challenger, Exidy Sorcerer, Apple II disk system and Heath H-8. We intend to continue this type of coverage, not only of systems, but peripherals and software as well.

Sorting: A Key Technique

While evaluations are important, the main focus of Creative Computing magazine is computer applications of all kinds. Many of these require that data be retrieved or sorted. Unfortunately, most programming texts focus on the bubble sort (or straight insertion) and, very infrequently, another technique (usually delayed replacement) and let it go at that.

Yet, except for comparison counting, the bubble sort is the least efficient. Tutorials and articles in Creative Computing demonstrate that the Shell-Metzner and Heapsort are from 50 to 13,000 times as fast as the bubble sort! Consider a sort of 100,000 items on a DEC System 10:

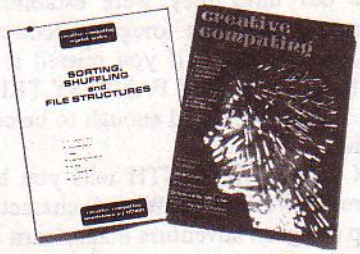
Bubble sort	7.1 days
Delayed replacement	3.8 days
Heapsort	17.3 minutes
Shell-Metzner	15.0 minutes

Needless to say, on a microcomputer, a bubble sort of even 1000 items is agonizingly long.

Free Sorting and Shuffling Reprint

Because sorting and shuffling (mixing a list of items) is so vital in most programming, we are making available a 20-page reprint booklet on Sorting, Shuffling and File Structures along with our May 1979 issue which has several articles on writing user-oriented programs and making the most of available memory space. The reprint booklet and issue are free with 12-issue or longer subscriptions.

At Creative Computing, we believe that computers can be of benefit to virtually every intelligent person in the country. We do not believe that the "Computer priesthood" should confuse and bully the public. As Ted Nelson stated in the Computer Lib Pledge, we do not treat any question as a dumb question, since there is no such thing. We are against computer terms or systems that are oppressive, insulting or unkind, and we are doing the best we can to improve or replace such terminology or systems. We are committed to doing all we can to further human understanding and make computers easy to understand, interactive wherever possible, and fun for the user. The complete Computer Lib Pledge is contained in our May 1979 issue which we are furnishing free to new subscribers.



Free reprint booklet and issue with a new subscription to Creative Computing.

Contributing editor Ted Nelson (L) is author of "Computer Lib/Dream Machines." Publisher David Ahl (R) is a pioneer in computer models, simulations and games.

Computer literacy to everyone!

Yes! I want to start reading Creative Computing Magazine every month. Be sure to send me your **FREE** guide to Sorting and Shuffling Techniques along with the May 1979 issue of Creative (offer good while quantities last).

Enter my subscription for:
- ☐ 12 issues $15 (save $9 over newsstand price)
- ☐ 24 issues $28 (save $20 over newsstand price)
- ☐ 36 issues $40 (save $32 over newsstand price)
- ☐ Payment enclosed (check or money order)
- ☐ Bill me ($1 billing charge will be added)

Charge to my
☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express
_____ Exp. date_____
Signature _____
Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

For faster service, call our toll-free hotline: 800-631-8112 (in NJ, 201-540-0445).

Expect your subscription to begin within 6 to 8 weeks.

creative computing
P.O. Box 789-M Morristown, NJ 07960

CH80

Featured Review:

The Fantasy Trip

by Ronald Pehr

Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls, here it is. It's stupendous, it's colossal, it's the greatest fantasy role-playing game on earth! Presented by Metagaming, designed by Steve Jackson, in the year 1980 . . . THE FANTASY TRIP! (flourish of trumpets).

This is Metagaming's long-awaited FRP game, designed for a game master and any number of players. It consists of three 8½" x 11" rule booklets, each costing $5, with identical pictures of fantastic adventurers on each cover. IN THE LABYRINTH, the Game Master's module, has 78 pages. ADVANCED MELEE, the combat rules, has 32 pages. ADVANCED WIZARD, the magic rules, has 39 pages.

Those who recall the mutually incompatible Original, Basic, and Advanced versions of another, extremely popular, FRP game may feel that there is dirty work afoot here. Is Metagaming attempting the same type of skullduggery, marketing the same games twice? Not really. The originals are just that, stand-alone Microgames. They can be part of THE FANTASY TRIP if you don't want to buy the ADVANCED versions but only because they're so well-designed themselves. The ADVANCED MELEE and WIZARD make no claim to be games, they are just part of THE FANTASY TRIP.

This puts the game in a bad price range. At $15 it isn't anywhere near as expensive as *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* (a game whose price, scope, size, and complexity put it in a whole different league). However, it is slightly more costly than the basic versions of *Chivalry & Sorcery, Runequest,* or *Tunnels & Trolls.* "Worth the money" is a subjective evaluation; the price differences are small enough that THE FANTASY TRIP can be honestly considered a competitor. To me, it is a very good one. The game systems pioneered in the Microgames were playable, fun, and adapt well to their expansion and improvement. Does THE FANTASY TRIP do anything that *Runequest* doesn't? Honestly, no. The latter also has a far better developed background world and a seemingly more realistic combat system. However, it requires a lot of time, attention and numerical figuring. THE FANTASY TRIP offers as much scope for gaming, better playability, the magic system is just as "realistic" and, most important, you can keep track of what the characters are doing without the arithmetic.

The problem, again, is price. Someone who had played the Original D&D, and was looking to start his own FRP campaign might have purchased *Runequest* or *Chivalry & Sorcery* because they offered coherent games with better mechanics than D&D. Adding on the supplements made D&D better, but also more expensive, and the Advanced version was more expensive still and wasn't published as a full campaign game one at a time. So, someone who wanted that, wasn't satisfied with Original D&D, and didn't own a money tree went out and bought one of the other games. THE FANTASY TRIP isn't cheaper than they are and didn't come out until they were established.

Having stated the foregoing economic facts, let me say – if you missed it the first time – that THE FANTASY TRIP is very, very good. Good enough to be competitive.

IN THE LABYRINTH tells you how to create Warrior or Wizard characters, set up dungeon adventure maps, learn and use talents for adventuring, gives the background of Cidri – the world where the action takes place – and describes the various humanoids and monsters. There are rules for encumberance, character reactions, traps, and how the various talents are applied in an adventure. There's a brief foray into economics (did you ever wonder how much a wizard can make washing dishes if he can't get a magic gig?), sample dungeon and outdoor maps, and sample character record sheets.

ADVANCED MELEE covers movement and combat options, various contingencies a character might face such as climbing, swimming, and ambush, various optional additions to the combat system – specifically designed to add a realistic feeling but slowing play of the combats – and there is even an optional combat system for faster, less complex play.

ADVANCED WIZARD describes different types of spells, use of magic in conjunction with the combat system, rules for characters to create magic potions and artifacts. Each of the rules booklets has a page or two of sample hexes which can be photocopied for an unending supply of gaming arenas.

It is the hexagonal-spaces game "board" which makes THE FANTASY TRIP unique. Unlike other games it is designed to be played with pieces moved on a board. The board consists of linked hexagons, each representing one and 1/3 meters, the pieces are anything which indicate individual characters. Most people use 25mm metal figurines, sold by many different companies. Whenever a situation arises wherein distance is important, and that usually means combat, markers are put on the board at the appropriate distance from each other. All movement and weapon ranges are given in terms of the number of hexes separating characters. In this way are resolved the questions of who could perform certain activities at certain times during the hostilities between characters. All games have some sort of movement criteria, usually expressed in scale inches, but THE FANTASY TRIP fully develops the use of a board to completely define the operational limits of the characters. This might seem limiting, the kind of thing you took up FRP to avoid, but it actually makes the game far more workable. Gone are the disputes between the players and Game Master in which the former claims the characters were out of position or didn't have enough time. There is now a graphic, discernable basis for ongoing actions which increases rather than limits the fun. Those who can't stand the idea of a board in FRP can simply convert "hexes" to inches and play on any surface, even actual scale-model terrain.

The other unique feature of THE FANTASY TRIP is use of the basic characteristics of the characters to resolve

situations. Every character has Strength (ST), Dexterity (DX), and Intelligence (IQ); every special action attempted depends directly on these. You roll a certain number of dice and if the number is less than the parameter being tested then the action was successfully undertaken. Thus, to kick open a locked door requires rolling 5 dice to generate a number less than or equal to the character's ST, to walk and chew gum at the same time requires rolling a number less than the character's DX (only kidding, Steve, put down that battleaxe), and so on.

ST, DX, and IQ are selected, within limits defined by the rules, and they may be increased as the player achieves experience for slaying monsters, avoiding traps, casting magic spells, and otherwise performing heroic deeds. There may come a point where a character can do nearly anything, nearly anytime, a problem in many role-playing games. The only antidote is an imaginative Game Master arranging more perilous situations requiring higher amounts of dice to be rolled, or situations where the *player* must figure out the solutions.

The use of only three basic characteristics may seem overly simple-minded to those who are used to a character having six, eight, or more, and even then have various charts and tables to resolve combat, magic, and special situations. If that's the way you feel, you won't like THE FANTASY TRIP no matter what it offers. To some extent, I'm one of those people. But THE FANTASY TRIP must be evaluated by the criterion "Does It Work?" Yes. It allows absorbing, interesting, fascinating play, by an elegant system which is easy to use and doesn't sacrifice too much of the character identification that comes with elaborate sets of basic characteristics that are rolled in other games.

There are faults in this game, no doubt about it. The static "you-move-then-I-move-then-we-strike" is a holdover from Microgaming wherein a balanced tactical system was more important than simulating the fluid motion of a real duel. There are facets of play that are glossed over (personality, size, and reactions of different characters). Some monsters are too stereotyped and limited in their options ("Uh oh, it's the Giant Amoeba; we've got one roll to hit the nucleus before we're engulfed." "Uh oh, it's an Apep; we've only got a chance to run or fight because he won't talk to us.")

The absolute worst, and inexcusable fault is the total lack of organization. Rules are scattered hither and yon, with no index to give you a clue. IN THE LABYRINTH has an inadequate Table of Contents, the other booklets don't even have that. It should have been easy enough to preserve the presentation sequence of the Microgames rules and insert the ADVANCED rules to be playable as Microgames. It also states on the first page of the two ADVANCED rules that they aren't stand-alone games, but even though Metagaming wanted to preserve that difference, it wouldn't have hurt to have had as clean and organized presentation in the FRP modules as in the Micros. THE FANTASY TRIP was a long time in coming, in that time there could have been a lot more attention to detail and presentation. Coming late in the current cycle of interest in FRP, THE FANTASY TRIP needs every advantage it can get.

THE FANTASY TRIP is an excellent FRP game system. I'd have liked it to be better organized and a few dollars cheaper. Those who purchase it anyway will be very glad they did.

TSG BACK ISSUES

Some back issues of TSG are still available:

No. 15. Wizard and Olympica designer intros; Robotics in Traveller; Floating Hulks; Ogre Update; Orcs and Their Weapons; computer gaming.

No. 16. WarpWar article; Classics Simulated in Melee; Alpha Omega; Demons! (Moties in Melee); 1977 game survey results – and a LOT of reviews.

No. 17. GEV designer's intro; strategy for Chitin: I; variants for Imperium, Melee, and a combination Ogre/Rivets variant; WarpWar fiction.

No. 18. IceWar designer's intro; variant scenarios for Invasion: America and War of the Ring; additional equipment for Traveller; mounted Melee; "Referee, Declare Thyself!" (role-playing GM technique).

No. 19. POND WAR; variant units and scenarios for GEV; combining Imperium and WarpWar; Battlefleet Mars variant; reviews of Swords & Sorcery, Runequest, and Raumkrieg; MicroGame design article.

No. 20. Olympica tactics; Psionics in Traveller; TARTARS & MARTYRS; Reality in Melee; designer's optional rules for Ice War; designer's article on Starships & Spacemen; "Rip-Off Blues" (wargaming's frauds).

No. 21. Interview with Dave Arneson; running a Microgame tournament; tactics for Ogre and GEV; spaceship miniatures; Black Hole variant rules; putting the Deryni into Melee; more reviews.

No. 22. Ice War tactics; Black Hole physics; PARTY BRAWL; 1978 SF/fantasy game survey results; Fantasy Trip short story.

No. 23. Invasion Of The Air Eaters designer's article; Ogre meets Ice War; Sticks & Stones expansion; Vikings and Valde in The Fantasy Trip.

No. 24. Black Hole designer's intro; "The Psychology of Wargaming"; Naval Melee; "The Four-Howitzer Defense in Ogre"; variants for Chitin: I, The Creature That Ate Sheboygan, and John Carter of Mars.

No. 25. Stellar Conquest issue . . . designer's article, tournament tactics, and variant scenarios. Also – strategy in Rivets, benefit-cost analysis for Ice War, and "Everyday Life in *The Fantasy Trip*."

No. 26. Oneworld designer's intro; Tactics in G.E.V.; Variations on Wizard; Computers in Wargaming; Life-sized Melee; and a variant that puts human forces into Rivets.

No. 27. Hot Spot designer's introduction; Time Travel; Nuke the Air Eaters (gaming atomic war); Weapons for Hobbits in TFT; Muskets in TFT; Game Design Part 15 pages of game reviews.

No. 28. 1979 game survey results; Overmen in TFT; A Guide to SF/Fantasy Game Publishers; Task Force Games report; Writers' and Artists' Guides; 7 pages of reviews; Game Design Part 2; Deus ex Machina.

No. 29. Fantasy Trip designer's intro; Painting Fantasy Miniatures; Fantasy and SF game magazines surveyed; Game Design Part 3; more Deus ex Machina; 7 pages of reviews.

No. 30. KUNG FU 2100; Painting Fantasy Miniatures II, Index to Game Articles; Game Design Part 4; Programmable Calculators; 10 pages of reviews.

Send $2.00 per copy, plus 50 cents per order for postage and handling, to TSG, Box 18805, Austin, TX 78760.

Featured Review: DragonQuest

by Forrest Johnson

Dragonslayer . . . Oops! DRAGONQUEST is out, and only a month after the release date.

1.784 DESIGN IN HASTE, REPENT AT LEISURE.

With all its talented staff, SPI has managed to do what companies like TSR and Metagaming did with lesser resources – mess up a promising new system.

SPI is a simulations company. Here, it had to create a simulation of something that existed only in its own mind. In the end, it simulated D&D, fantasy literature, mythology, medieval history – everything all jumbled together in the familiar manner. SPI's staff approach means that one designer is credited for the character generation system, another for the combat system, and a third for the magic system.

23.162 THE WHOLE IS LESS THAN THE SUM OF THE PARTS.

The character generation system is the best I've seen, a brilliant compromise between "rolling up" characters and distributing points between the characteristics. The combat system combines some of the better features of *Melee* and *Runequest*. But, since a broadsword does 1d10+4 points damage, and a typical fighter wears 10 or 12 points of armor, one-on-one combat can be rather dull.

Magicians belong to one of twelve "colleges," rather like *Chivalry and Sorcery*. But the attention devoted to the colleges is uneven, and you do not find the background one sees in games like C&S and *Runequest*.

Several factors conspire to limit the role of magicians. The more powerful spells are difficult to master, and there is a good chance they will backfire. Magicians are more vulnerable to magic than ordinary folk. And a spell takes, in effect, one combat turn to "prepare," so your wizard may have to remove a cold-iron crossbow bolt from his thorax before he can use his spell.

(Incidentally, if you like SPI's *Demons*, there they are again, 16 pages of them.)

Characters may learn a "skill," like healer, thief, or courtesan. But experience points devoted to a skill cannot be used to improve your swordsmanship or ability to cast a spell. The experience point system is highly restrictive. Experience points must be applied to each weapon and spell separately (so a rank 9 *dagger* man does not know how to use a *knife*), and you can forget a skill you don't practice. It is possible, eventually, to become a superhero, if you are not first killed or blighted by old age.

DRAGONQUEST includes 33 pages of monsters, most of them straight out of the *AD&D Monster Manual*. However, some of them have a special SPI flavor. For example, male nixies are called nixons. "They are capricious and cowardly and prefer to destroy their prey by guile whenever possible." *(Aha! Simulation!)*

DRAGONQUEST is the first FRP game supplied with good play components. It actually comes with both a tactical map and counters for combat. The map is beautiful, with large hexes – different sections can be used for indoor and outdoor scenarios. The counters show stylized pictures of characters, weapons, and furniture.

82.832 A CAMEL IS A HORSE DESIGNED BY A COMMITTEE.

Unfortunately, these good, bad, and indifferent elements do not fit together very well. In some places they overlap outrageously; in others they leave some bothersome gaps. There is a set of rules for "shape-changers" under "Character Generation," and a different set for "weres" under "Monsters." The magic rules say that a member of the College of Necromantic Conjurations can become a wight, but the monster rules say wights are limited to Celestial Magics (which come under a different college).

In many places, the rules assume the players are morons who must be carefully led by the hand. The person who wrote the character generation rules found it necessary to say, "A character may only be hermaphroditic or asexual if his player receives special permission from the gamemaster." But in other places, it is assumed that the players are gifted people who would really prefer to create their own game. For example, what kind of initiation do you need to join the College of Greater Summonings? (It must be good; they give you 3,580 silvers worth of equipment, gratis.)

157.319 A GIANT ON A DWARF'S SHOULDERS CAN SEE THE FARTHER OF THE TWO.

Okay, DRAGONQUEST is not your dream game. And appearing in 1980, it is at a competitive disadvantage. But it was put together by professionals. Despite its faults, it still presents a pleasing contrast to the sloppiness of TFT, the illogic of D&D, the incoherence of C&S. It borrows good ideas liberally from the older systems, and offers noteworthy innovations of its own. Furthermore, the planned supplements, if only half of them see print, will make this an incredibly rich game.

At $9.95, DRAGONQUEST is a terrific buy. It is likely to give Gygax a run for his money.

DRAGONQUEST is a fantasy role-playing game by SPI. Designers: Eric Goldberg, David J. Ritchie, Edward J. Woods, Redmond A. Simonsen, Robert J. Ryer, and Brad E. Hessel. Three booklets, 152 pages total, one 17" x 22" map, 100 die-cut counters, boxed. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980. (Not included, but necessary for play: 10-sided dice.)

GAME MASTER

GAME MASTER exists to answer questions on your favorite games. If you have a rules question or play problem, send it in. Questions to be answered will be chosen on the basis of general interest. They will first be referred to the game publisher or designer. If no response is received, GAME MASTER will offer its own interpretation of the rule. Sorry – no individual replies are possible.

GAME MASTER also invites publishers to send errata or clarifications for their new games. They will be printed as space allows.

I purchased the game "Demons" on the basis of the reasonably favorable review in TSG 28. I'm afraid I did not agree with the review. One of the problems with the game is that the rules have some ambiguities. Attached find a photocopy of a letter I sent to SPI and the answers I received. I thought you might want to publish all or part of the letter a a service to other TSG readers that purchased the game. . . .

"According to rule 10.0, Friendly demons are "not lost when used in combat, except as a consequence of an adverse combat result." Does this mean that Non-friendly demons *are* lost when used in combat, regardless of the combat result?

"No. Disregard. This was a flub from earlier set of rules.

"What happens when a conjuration brings more demons than a player has room for on his Demons Controlled Display? For example, suppose a player has room for two more demons on his display, and he gets a four on his conjuration result. What happens?

"He draws four demons, and discards two of them (his choice), without using any of the powers of the two he discards.

"When computing victory points, does a player use the shield level at which he began or ended the game?

"Ended.

"Are the identity of the demons controlled by a player kept secret from the other players?

"No, when the demons are conjured, they are revealed.

"What is the relationship among 'discovering,' 'seizing,' and 'possessing' treasure?

"When the D power of a demon is used, a treasure is discovered, but not possessed by anyone. When a controlling magician's demon of higher precedence is released, and the proper die roll is made, the magician releasing the demon takes possession of the treasure. The only way he can lose the treasure is through torture.

"Can demon power I (Cause Invisibility) be used to escape captivity?

"Yes.

"Can demon power T (Rapid Transit) be used to escape captivity?

"No.

"What happens when a unit that is holding a magician captive is killed?

"The magician escapes."

Scott D. Johnson

We received several questions on *The Fantasy Trip* this month. Copies were sent to Metagaming, but no "official" answers were received. Following, then, are some suggestions as to how the questions might be resolved:

"On page 21 of ADVANCED MELEE, there is a chart listing damages in combat with fist, cestus, dagger, main-gauche, club, and maul at varying levels of strength. It is highly unlikely that characters with strengths up to 60 will be allowed often; still, as the rules stand, a man with a strength of 55 would conceivably do more damage with a fist or dagger than with a greatsword. Can you suggest a damage advance for exceptional strengths for other weapons than those detailed?"

–Aaron Allston

My first suggestion would be not to use human characters that strong. If you do, then they have to do greater damage. Were I to make up such a chart, though, it would retain the arithmetical relationship between weapons. In other words, a broadsword in this superman's hand would do maybe 1+1 more than his fist – not twice as much. At such strengths, the weapon becomes relatively trivial.

–SJ

"...Can I assume that Fencing and Two Weapons can always be combined when using two rapiers or rapier/main-gauche?"

–David R. Dunham

That's certainly the way I've been doing it.

–SJ

"Pertaining to WIZARD: Can a character use a wish to get an automatic hit with a thrown spell, if he is at extreme range? Specifically, is it kosher to use a wish to get an automatic success with Death Spell if the victim is not in the same city with the spellcaster?

"Second: Can a wish be used to modify a risk roll for automatic success if the character has 16+ in all attributes?

"Third: Can a wish teleport an unwilling character to the wisher's presence?"

–Robert Neville

Good question! I never thought of that. I'd limit the maximum possible range of a thrown spell to, say, 20 hexes. Beyond that, even a wish won't help. Within that, you could get an automatic hit. So you couldn't Death Spell a foe in another city. Unless, of course, you were standing on opposite sides of an opened Gate whose rule permitted magic to pass!

Second query: no.

Third query: I'd never allow it if I were GM. However, if you summon a Demon, you can tell him where to find your victim, and send him off to capture him/her.

–SJ

KUNG FU 2100 *ERRATA*

Sad to say, the game KUNG FU 2100, published in our last issue, wasn't perfect. The fault was not the designer's – it was ours. The map and examples received insufficient checking after being prepared in their final versions. A painful and embarrassing lesson.

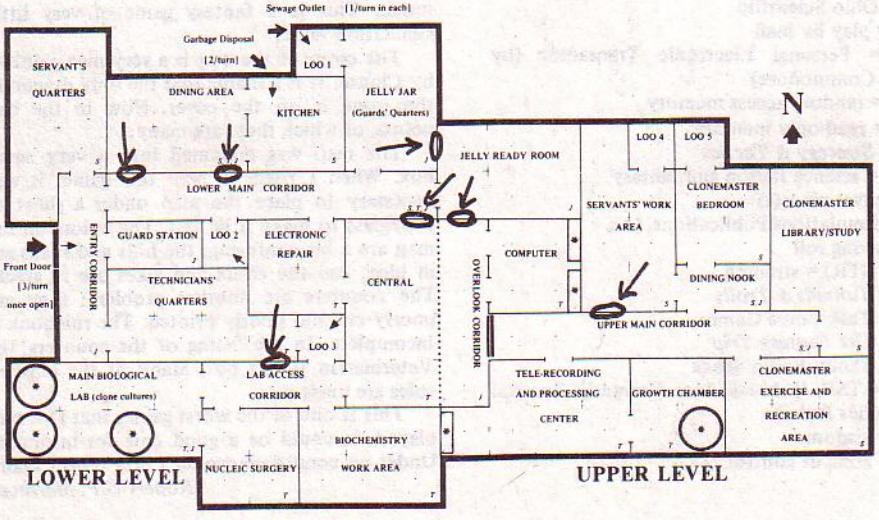
Fortunately, most of the glitches were minor and did not affect play. The really bad one was so bad that everyone we've heard from spotted and corrected it.

The errors were:

1. Seven doors were omitted from the game map. Two were really important; their omission made it impossible to leave the kitchen and dining area. Locations of all omitted doors are shown below by circles and arrows.

2. In the more complex example of play, the counter shown was that for Jelly 9. It should, of course, have been for Jelly 7, as described in the example. Furthermore, the text referred to Jelly 2's weapon as nunchaku. It was, of course, the kon-go.

Our apologies for the errors. Enjoy the game.



CAPSULE REVIEWS

THE SPACE GAMER reviews board games, role-playing games, computer games, video games, and game supplements. We review play-by-mail games if a reviewer is enrolled. We will review any science fiction or fantasy game if the publisher supplies a copy. We do not guarantee reviews of historical wargames. TSG may publish a review of a game we are not sent – IF a reader submits a review.

The staff will make reasonable efforts to check reviews for factual accuracy, but opinions expressed by reviewers are not necessarily those of the magazine. For information on writing reviews for TSG, see "Writing Reviews for THE SPACE GAMER" further on in this section.

Games for which reviews have been assigned or received include: *Azhanti High Lightning, Barbarian Kings, City of Lei Tabor, The Compleat Fantasist, Dark Nebula, Dra'k'ne Station, Earth Game, Elric, Final Frontier, Gamma World, The Gateway Beastiary, Hellpits of Nightfang, Monsters!Monsters!, Nebula 19, NORAD, Pen-Latol's World, Robots!, Star Quest, Starships and Spacecraft, The Temple to Athena, Traveller Double Adventure 2* and *The Traveller Logbook.*

Specific games for which we are seeking reviewers include: *Cerberus, City State of the World Emperor, It, MAATAC* and *Marine 2002.*

* * *

ARTIFACT (Metagaming); $3.95. Designed by Glenn Williams. 84 counters, 20-page 4" x 8" rulebook, 12" x 13" two-color map and a die (a Metagaming first!), plus the first semi-hard box instead of the typical plastic bag. ARTIFACT is for two players. Published 1980.

ARTIFACT is a tactical game of combat in the year 2000 AD on the surface of the moon, between Americans, Soviets, and Alien forces. The counters show silhouettes of men, rovers, landers, the Dingus, alien troops, and game playing aids in an awful shade of purple and white.

The game board is blue with black ink markings for the terrain features; these being hill, craterlet, and the large crater wall. Not very impressive, but typical of what Metagaming has been offering for the past few years.

The game box cover is a very nice piece by Doug Potter. Most of the interior work was up to Doug's usual standards. I liked the lander rules for flight and velocity. The scenarios on the whole were well balanced and somewhat enjoyable to play.

The rules were complete, but the verbiage was excessive. The simple movement/combat system was stretched too far. This game could have used a more complex system to properly simulate combat on the Earth's satellite.

In playing ARTIFACT, I felt as if I were playing a good game only partially developed. Metagaming needs to spend some more time on the chrome (counters and map artwork), as well as the basic playing system. Overall, Grade C minus.

–Robert G.F. Marrinan

ASTEROID ZERO-FOUR (TFG); $3.95. Designed by Stephen V. Cole. Softpack, with 20-page 5½" x 8½" rulebook, 21" x 16¾" mapsheet, 8½" x 10½" strategic display, 109 die-cut counters, 165 die-cut damage markers. Two players; one to four hours. Published 1979.

U.S. and Soviet mining asteroids are about to be cut off from Earth by massive solar flares. Anticipating this, both bases have been armed to the airlocks with nuclear missiles, space fighters, long-range bombers and laser towers. When the sun flares, and the stations are isolated from Earth's interference, the war for dominance in the asteroid belt will begin.

The designer of ASTEROID ZERO-FOUR boasts that his game "provides more distinct strategic options to its players than 95% of the games in print." He's right. It is a very detailed, very accurate simulation of nuclear war. Turns are structured so players have practically no idea what their opponent is planning until it is too late to react. The game has tremendous tactical feel. It can make you believe you are sitting in a command bunker somewhere in the bowels of an asteroid mining station waiting for the next wave of enemy fighters to hit.

Unfortunately, all this detail means a lot of bookkeeping. Each ship and missile has its own record. By the end of the game the asteroid maps are all but buried under damage markers, which are very clumsy and slow down play. The editing is good overall, but one table contradicts the rules, with no indication which is right. Also, the spaceship silhouettes look disturbingly like F-15's and Su-15's.

ASTEROID ZERO-FOUR is an intelligent, challenging game. It takes nerves and strategy to play well. If you can handle the bookkeeping, this one will make you sweat.

–Steve Winter

FOREST WARS OF THE HAVEN (Attack International); $5.98. Designed by Graham Diamond and D. H. Casciano. 100 counters, 2 charts, 4-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, 17" x 24" light cardboard map. Two players; playing time 1-2 hours. Published 1980.

FOREST WARS OF THE HAVEN is based on the book of the same title by Graham Diamond. This is a fantasy game of very little simulation value.

The cover of the box is a very nice painting by Clouse. It is a shame that the only dragon in the game is on the cover. Now to the bad points, of which there are many:

The map was crammed into a very small box. When I tried to play this game, it was necessary to place the map under a sheet of plexiglass to make it lie flat. The colors on the map are a bit confusing; the hills and roads are in blue, and the rivers and lakes are in green. The counters are another problem; they are poorly cut and poorly printed. The rulebook is incomplete. In the listing of the counters, the Veterinarian is left out. Many of the existing rules are unclear.

This is one of the worst games that I've ever played. It could be a good cure for insomnia. Under no conditions would I play it ever again.

Robert G.F. Marrinan

ABBREVIATIONS

AC = armor class
AD&D = *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*
AH = The Avalon Hill Company
APA = amateur press association (sometimes action point allowance)
CHA (or CHR) = charisma
CON = constitution
CP/M = control process monitor
c.p. = copper piece(s)
C&S = *Chivalry & Sorcery*
CRT = combat results table (sometimes cathode ray tube, i.e., TV screen)
d = die (3d6 means three 6-sided dice)
D&D = *Dungeons & Dragons*
DM = dungeon master
DX (or DEX) = dexterity
e.p. = experience point(s) (sometimes electrum pieces)
FBI = Flying Buffalo, Inc.
FRP(G) = fantasy role-playing (game)
GM = game master
g.p. = gold piece(s)
HTK = hits to kill
IQ (or INT) = intelligence
K = kilo-bytes of memory
LK = luck
MA = movement allowance
MR = monster rating
MU = magic user
OSI = Ohio Scientific
PBM = play by mail
PET = Personal Electronic Transactor (by Commodore)
RAM = random-access memory
ROM = read-only memory
S&T = *Strategy & Tactics*
SF&F = science fiction and fantasy
s.p. = silver piece(s)
SPI = Simulations Publications, Inc.
SR = saving roll
ST (or STR) = strength
T&T = *Tunnels & Trolls*
TFG = Task Force Games
TFT = *The Fantasy Trip*
TRS = Tandy-Radio Shack
TSR = TSR Hobbies, Inc. (formerly Tactical Studies Rules)
WIS = wisdom
ZOC = zone of control

FREEDOM IN THE GALAXY (SPI); $20. Designed by Howard Barasch and John H. Butterfield. Boxed, with 32-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, 12-page 8½" x 11" Galactic Guide, one 22" x 23" game map, 400 die-cut counters, two four-page sets of charts and tables, 140 play cards, compartmentalized tray and two six-sided dice. Two players; ½ hour to 30 hours or more. Published 1979.

The easiest way to describe FREEDOM IN THE GALAXY is Star Wars on a board. Rebels seek to win the support of local planet populations, raise armies and overthrow the oppressive Galactic Empire. The Empire must seek out and destroy rebel leaders and strongholds without losing its iron grip on its subjects. Both sides are represented by characters, such as the young rebel Adam Starlight and the Imperial Knight Redjac, and by large military units. Characters can act individually, in groups, or as military leaders. Planets can be controlled diplomatically or militarily. The rules cover personal and military land and space combat, alien environments, monsters, planetary defense bases, blockades, assassinations, subversion, sabotage, rebellion, rescue missions, spying, torture, oppressive taxation and planet-crushing weapons.

FITG is a big game with a lot of variety and many player options. The map, depicting 51 planets in 25 star systems, is a work of genius. Although the game is immense, almost all bookkeeping can be done on the map. There are six different types of Imperial units, from the lowly Militia to the dreaded Elite Navy, and 26 types of rebel units, varying by strength and native environment. The rulebook is divided into three sections of increasing complexity. Early scenarios deal with only one star system, moving up to a province and finally the whole empire.

FITG's sheer size means the rules can't cover every possible situation. There are numerous typographical errors, and two rule sections which talk about column shifts to the right when they obviously mean column shifts to the left. Space battles can stretch on for months, and separate space engagements around one planet are resolved as one battle. The game is fast-paced, but the full campaign can take 30 hours or more.

FITG is not for people who like simple games – it is long and complex – but it's a good investment in terms of fun dollars spent, and a must for anyone with $20 and a handful of Star Wars ticket stubs in their jeans.

–Steve Winter

JOURNEY (Grenadier Models); $10.00. Boxed, with a 16" x 16" map, a sixteen-page 5" x 7" rulebook, four ship status cards, twenty uncut counters, eighty punch-out cards, and two dice. Two to four players; playing time about forty minutes. Published 1980.

JOURNEY is one of Grenadier Models' new "Great Little Game Line," a series of "midi-games" attractively packaged in a narrow box, with nice cover art. The game's somewhat-hokey rationale is that ships from two to four contending worlds are competing to get to the Epsilon Cygni II system to pick up a supply of much-needed plienthium magnate. The game map depicts the galaxy, more or less, with a series of five concentric circles, each with nineteen spaces. Players move around these circles by die roll, subtracting the number of squares moved from a fuel allotment chart on the status sheet for each ship. Most of the squares are occupied by a symbol of some sort, and most of these require a card draw from the appropriate pile of either "alien raiders," "galactic disturbances," "unexplored planets," or "black holes."

JOURNEY has some nice ideas. The use of cards adds to the game in allowing some random events and varied encounters to occur. The quality of the components is generally good, save that one would have hoped for die-cut counters with a $10 price tag.

JOURNEY is set up and plays like a parlor game. While not exactly an interstellar *Candy Land*, JOURNEY will probably bore most wargamers rather quickly. Movement by die roll means players don't have much control; the major decision is when to stop for refueling. Players can attack one another only after one of the participants has loaded with the precious mineral. Generally players are competing against the cards rather than their opponents, and this makes for a somewhat dull game where the players themselves make few important decisions.

Despite the interesting use of cards, I can't find much to recommend in this game. Most gamers will tire of it quickly, and the price of $10 would be much better spent, in terms of play value, in picking up two or three of the various Micros and capsule-format games on the market.

–Tony Watson

MYTHOLOGY (Yaquinto); $14.00. Designed by Steve Peek. Boxed, with 24" x 38" mapsheet, 1-page rulesheet for basic game, 12-page rulebook for advanced game, pad of record sheets, 10 god cards, 54 playing cards, about 200 counters, two dice. Two to eight players; playing time two hours up. Published 1980.

MYTHOLOGY simulates the events of ancient Greek mythology, when "Gods and Goddesses ruled supreme." Each player takes the role of a god or goddess, killing monsters (or heroes!), capturing prizes and racking up glory points. He may hinder the other gods with plague, pestilence, earthquake, famine, and worst of all, the occasional feast (which causes other gods to lose their turns).

First the good points. The mapsheet is beautiful: bright colors, well-drawn, and on card stock instead of paper. The counters are heavy and nicely done in three sizes and several colors. There are plenty of log sheets, which are well-designed and very helpful.

Unfortunately, typos abound on the counters, and I found a few beauties in the rules. The plastic tray has no lid and the large counters fit poorly, so you can rely on the counters getting scrambled. The basic and advanced games have little in common except for the components; they are two different games. The basic game is simple-minded and static. The advanced game is overly complex and almost unplayable (at least with four players; I am told play is more fluid with six). The rules are hard to read, hard to understand, and hard to explain to a new player.

The game had promise, but it failed to deliver. I do not recommend it.

–John Strohm

ODYSSEUS, LEGENDRY & MYTHOLOGY (Fantasy Games Unlimited); $5.50. Designed by Marshall T. Rose. 32-page 8½" x 11" booklet, one character reference sheet, 36 cards to cut apart, and two ship plans, all on heavy paper. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980. (Not included, but necessary for play: six-sided and percentile dice.)

ODYSSEUS is a system of "role-play for the Homeric age." It includes character generation rules, ships, combat, maps, matrices, descriptions of the gods, and explains how to set up and run a campaign. All in *one* book!

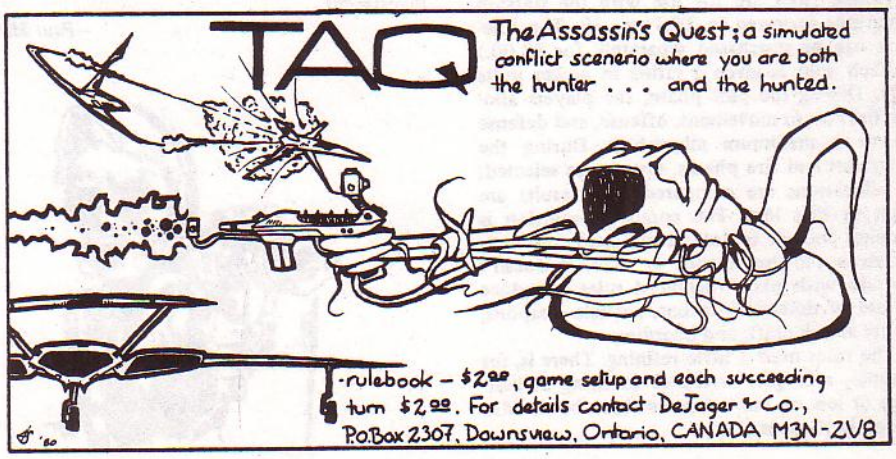
Rarely has there been such organization in a book of this kind. Many things that could happen to ships and people are explained and charted. Combat and weapons descriptions simulate the Greek style of fighting well. There is even a section, "Rules Check," provided to let you see how well you understood the rules up to that point.

The character generation rules are a little skimpy at times, and some of the numerous tables are difficult to figure out. But a few minutes' perusal will straighten out most of the problems. The combat system is a bit strange: each character takes a card, figures out the percentage to hit, then rolls dice. (Sample calculation of hit probability: 45 + 10 - 15 + 0 - 03 = 37.)

As new RP systems go, this one is above average. Only one book, and it is well-designed. Historical gamers specializing in the classic period, this is for you.

–Elisabeth Barrington

SPACE FUTURE (Family Pastimes, RR4, Perth, Ontario, Canada K7H 3C6 – available through World Future Society, 4916 St. Elmo Ave., Washington D.C. 20014); $9.50. Designed by Jim Deacove. Five page 8½" x 14" booklet, 17" x 25" map, 40 die-cut fuel tokens, 25 plastic mission tokens, 15 equipment cards, 45 experience cards, and four spacecraft control charts; packaged in a cardboard box. For 2-4 players; playing time varies with the scenario.


TAQ
The Assassin's Quest; a simulated conflict scenario where you are both the hunter . . . and the hunted.
-rulebook – $2.00, game setup and each succeeding turn $2.00. For details contact DeJager + Co.,
P.O.Box 2307, Downsview, Ontario, CANADA M3N-2V8

SPACE FUTURE is a game (not a simulation) of space exploration, designed to stress cooperation and peaceful exploration instead of competition and conflict. Each player commands one or more of the four spacecraft, attempting to collect mission tokens representing scientific data and cultural information and return them to Earth. Along the way players will endeavor to raise their level of Personal Development through Insight, Knowledge, and positive experiences; lower levels indicate greater cultural bias and lack of understanding, and will restrict the players in their completion of the mission.

During a turn the players will move about the map along a convoluted track connecting the satellites of six fictional planets. Ending a move on a satellite allows the player to land on the planet, where he may acquire mission tokens or equipment (i.e. repair kit, medical kit, emergency fuel). As a player moves he may encounter hazards which will damage his spacecraft, gain Insight and Knowledge, or have experiences which will affect his level of Personal Development.

SPACE FUTURE's major strength and weakness lie in the fact that it is a cooperative game; either everybody wins together or everybody loses together. There are no game mechanics for any form of competition or conflict aside from simply refusing to help the other players. This game is great for those days when no one wants to lose; a bit of luck and cooperation will virtually insure a win in the simplest scenario. Of course, those players wishing to release their hostilities during the game will find themselves frustrated by a lack of any sort of combat. The more competitive players could keep track of who brings back the most mission tokens, but those players desiring to cause a few megadeaths will have to look for some other science fiction game.

Overall, the game is a very simple one (the rules say "for ages 10 and up") which will probably only be of interest to those people who have children (or gamer friends) who scream and throw things when they lose. It might be fun for those gamers who wish to play a game where they can win without beating their friends.

–Eric B. Paperman

STARFLEET WARS (Superior Models; distributed by Alnavco, Box 9, Belle Haven, VA 23306); $15.00. Designed by Wayne Smith and Ron Spicer. One 16-page 5½" x 8½" rulebook, one reference table chart, two percentile dice, one plotting pad, and five starships. Published 1978.

(These rules are for use with the starship miniatures reviewed in TSG no. 30. The rulebook can be purchased separately for $8.00.)

Each ship is given a rating in power units (PU). During the plot phase, the players allocate the PUs to movement, offense, and defense (up to a maximum allowable). During the movement and fire phases, targets are selected, PU allocations are compared, and results are taken in PUs lost. The combat resolution is complex enough to suit most tastes, and even though a plotting record is used, it doesn't interfere with play. Advanced rules introduce the use of defensive screens, particle weapons, smaller attack craft, and boarding.

The rules need a little refining. There is, for example, a cryptic reference to firing at half-range or less on the reference chart, but no discussion in the rules.

In the use of PUs, we found that if you wanted to carefully creep toward your opponent at minimum speed, there were plenty of PUs left for maximum offense and defense. Perhaps the allocation of PUs is set too high, or, perhaps, if the range rules were clarified, there would be some incentive to get in close fast.

While the number of PUs might be set high, the differentation of PUs between classes of ships is good. A major pitfall in this kind of game is to spend your time thinking up fancy names and then give all the ships nearly identical characteristics. Here the PUs and the maximums for offense, defense, and movement pretty well reflect the national characteristics given in the political discussion.

One of my main gripes with miniatures is movement calculated in inches with no grid. In STARFLEET WARS the effect is mitigated somewhat by the lack of terrain – you ought to be travelling in a straight line anyway. I'd write off to Zocchi and buy some 3" hex sheets and convert the whole thing over – much neater.

If you can afford the beautiful miniatures, you'll need some rules for play. STARFLEET WARS can get you started, after you've done a bit of tinkering. Better still would be to wait for Superior to issue a revised edition.

–Nick Schuessler

SWASHBUCKLER (Yaquinto); $7.00. Designed by Thomas O'Neill. Double record jacket with 12-page 8½" x 11" booklet, 95 extra-thick die-cut counters, mounted map board, game card, and an order sheet. Two to six players; playing time about one or two hours. Published 1980.

SWASHBUCKLER is a fast, exciting game of pirates and musketeers, pieces of eight, flashing swords and muttered oaths, toppled tables and shelves, thrown mugs and chairs, and swinging from ropes and chandeliers. Players take the role of boisterous and daring characters who loot ships, wreck taverns, and just plain fight. Victory goes to the strongest, bravest, and most skillful and cunning player. The game goes on until all but you are dead or the Cardinal's Guards break up the brawl.

SWASHBUCKLER does not get bogged down in the sea of tables and rules like other games of its type. Players "get into" the role of playing their characters. The rules give a special reality to the game. Players must be cunning, knowing when to press the attack and when it's time to jump out the nearest window.

The only thing that may trouble a new player is grasping the simultaneous movement system.

SWASHBUCKLER is a relaxing and enjoyable game. The components are of high quality, and the price tag is $7.00; it's a worthwhile investment.

–Paul Manz

TIMETRIPPER (SPI); $5.95. Designed by Jim Dunnigan. Boxed, with 16-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, 100 die-cut counters, 11" x 17" map. For 1-4 players, 2-4 hours playing time. Published 1980.

Like the old TV series, *The Time Tunnel,* TIMETRIPPER is about a modern-day hero who randomly travels in time to various crises and battles of the past and future, trying to return to the present. A Vietnam soldier, armed to the teeth with modern weaponry, has a "modified radio" that lets him travel in time, and is seized by a "frenzy" which gives him somewhat superhuman abilities. He can find himself fighting dinosaurs or a sabertooth, or in the battle of Hastings or Waterloo, or in World War II, or he can go into the "future" where things get *really* weird – fighting aliens or leprechauns or magic buffalo or rollerball players or Timepolice or cars on the Los Angeles freeway. Seventy-two battles are described, many with interesting twists. The "Timetripper" is player-controlled, while the "historical" creatures and people move randomly. The basic game is solitaire, but multi-player team play and refereed play are described.

TIMETRIPPER creates a mood of bizarreness and surrealism. Like *Alice in Wonderland,* it has its own logic. TIMETRIPPER is fast-moving, playable, and exciting. The rules are reasonably simple, but skill is definitely involved. Players can select their weapons from M-16's, shotguns, pistols, anti-tank rockets, hand grenades, phosphorus grenades to blind the enemy, Claymore mines, and ammunition: each has its own use. Each battle turn, a character must decide whether to fire a weapon, reload a weapon, rest to recover from wounds and fatigue, or command the "flux" in preparation for time travel. Players must decide quickly whether to fight or flee in a particular situation.

The only real problem is that historical soldiers aren't consistent. For example, a Byzantine cataphract of 1071 is more formidable than a machine gun-armed 1950 Chinese soldier, and a Sioux bowman can fire at longer range than a Nazi infantryman can. This is probably for play balance.

TIMETRIPPER is one of the few non-Swords-and-Sorcery fantasy games. Its design is highly innovative. TIMETRIPPER is highly recommended for all fantasy or s-f gamers who want to try something out of the ordinary.

Keith Gross

WRECK OF THE PANDORA (SPI); $5.95. Designed by James Dunnigan. 7-page 8½" x 11" rules booklet, 11" x 17" mapsheet and 100 counters. Boxed version will include die, *Ares* version does not. For 1-5 players; up to three hours playing time. Published 1980.

The *Pandora* is a spaceship full of man-eating monsters. Players take the roles of individual crew members and try to capture or kill the monsters. But in WOTP this is complicated by the fact that during the wreck, the crew members have forgotten where everything (monsters, tools, and ship systems) is located. Even worse, if the ship is found to be too badly damaged, it starts shutting itself down. If it succeeds, you lose, and the crew dies.

This can cause things to get nerve-wracking at times, especially if you don't have the correct tools to repair the ship. The variety of tools available to the players is confusing, but it adds to the fun when you get used to it.

WOTP's map needs work; the ship's compartments are too small. Incidentally, two-

thirds of the mapsheet is displays, tables, and turn records. Another problem is that there is a lot of dice rolling required for various game functions.

For solitaire gamers, WOTP is a good game choice. The game plays best with very few crew members running around. I would recommend this as a good one-person game.

–Craig Barber

SIGNORI DI ZARGO, SIEGNEURS DE ZARGO, ZARGO'S LORDS, DIE HERREN DES ZARGO (Simulation Games); $29.95. Designed in Italy. 38" x 26" puzzle-style map in five pieces, 2 circular calendar/ combat results tables, 4 "peoples" cards, 260 die-cut counters, 6½" x 12½" 19-page rulebook, 2 dice, plastic tray, boxed. Two to four players; playing time 2-6 hours. Published 1980.

ZARGO'S LORDS is a game of battles between up to four peoples fighting for control of the world of Zargo. Among other novel terrain features, there are whirlpools in the ground which paralyse anyone caught in them for three turns. The hex-shaped counters are a bit easier to work with than square counters. The heavy game board has no folds or flying corners; it fits together like a puzzle and lays flat. The graphics on the map are really beautiful, albeit a bit crowded with unnecessary drawings. The rules are arranged very clearly.

Whether you play with 2, 3, or 4 players, the game works well. The players can form alliances, or work alone (necessary in the two-player game). The four peoples and the various groups within them add a lot of variety to a familiar game system. And you can get some interesting results from the CRT: defenders' and attackers' retreats are given along with a number, meaning the number of hexes you must retreat – any units (friendly) in your path of retreat must be "pushed" back behind you as well.

However, the counters are the *exact* size of the map hexes, making the handling a bit clumsy. If the hexes were larger, though, the map would be impossibly huge. As it is, the person on the other side of the board must move your counters, else you must get up and walk over there yourself. The printing job on the counters is such that many of the numbers on them were cut in half. Because of air currents, movement over water is possible only on "cloud bridges." Cloud bridges? I thought clouds moved *with* the wind. Sand bars or something would have been more logical. Getting used to the combat system may take a while. It is similar to the usual wargame system, but it is on a circular dial-board. First you roll the die, then you look up the roll, calculate the *differences* in strengths, and then determine the result. There are four different tables: one each for visions, arrows, flames, and regular battles. The grammar is a little mixed up at times ("One only piece can attack more enemies . . ."); this is because the rules were translated from Italian to French, English and German. The English versions are difficult to locate, as *everything* is printed in four languages. If you can read more than one of them, you may have an easier time.

If you don't mind slight difficulties in moving pieces, finding rules, and sorting through four CRTs, this is a fun game. The background is a familiar one, but the scenario is novel in some ways and uses some interesting ideas. Though not at the top, I place ZARGO'S LORDS above average.

–Elisabeth Barrington

SUPPLEMENTS

ENCOUNTERS IN THE PHOENIX QUADRANT, published by Group One (1737 Walnut Grove, Decatur, IL 62526); $3.00. Approved for use with *Traveller*. One 16-page mimeographed 8½" x 11" booklet. Any number of players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

ENCOUNTERS IN THE PHOENIX QUADRANT is an approved play aid for *Traveller* and a handy little booklet for referees who are tired of using the standard *Traveller* ships, yet don't wish to take the time to design their own. It describes three new ship types – a deep space miner, a Sprinter freighter, and an exploration ship – and their crews, and includes, as a fourth encounter vessel, a new scout ship class, different from existing GDW and Judges Guild designs. Each ship is completely laid out with deck plans and compartment-by-compartment run-downs, including cargo, crew effects, etc. In addition, each crew member is fleshed out with UPP skills, physical and personality descriptions, weaponry and armor, and enough background to give the referee a good idea how the character would react to any given situation.

One of the more interesting features of this play aid is the added dimension of romance between characters, one that has been lacking from *Traveller* materials heretofore. Granted, even here it is limited to a reference to two of the Miner crew as "lovers," but it still opens the game up to whole new vistas.

The only real flaws visible in this supplement are minor omissions. For example, the scout ship, strangely enough, has no target program in its computer. And certain crewmen on the exploration ship are noted as having skill in and possessing a "machine pistol" – a weapon that hasn't appeared in any of the *Traveller* books to date. No explanation is given of how a machine pistol operates, leaving this deatil, in an otherwise thorough work, up to the referee's imagination.

Overall, the wealth of detailed information on ships and their crews makes ENCOUNTERS IN THE PHOENIX QUADRANT a worthwhile purchase for almost any *Traveller* player or referee. If, however, you prefer to create your own encounter situations from scratch and have no use for even so much as a frame on which to hang your ideas, you'd best be advised to leave this aid on the shelves.

–William A. Barton

INFERNO (Judges Guild); $5.95. Designed by Geoffry O'Dale. 64-page 8½" x 11" book. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

This is an AD&D adaptation of the first four rings of Dante's *Inferno*. It is for those that have gotten cursed scrolls saying, "GO TO HELL!!" or owe a Geas to some Lawful Good cleric. Hell is everything it's cracked up to be. Not just anybody can dash in and out of this place. As a matter of fact, it would be the achievement of a character's career to get out alive, as it should be. Everything is covered, from Tiamat's cave to the palace of Minos – and nothing is easy; both new and old Devils and monsters abound here.

But not everything is as it should be. Minos' Palace has 13 rooms and Tiamat's cave has four paragraphs, where it should have a book of its own. Often a description of some new magical item will take up more room than the overall description of the level it's on. Usually the only

major encounters are those on the road through, leaving the rest of the circle one big random encounter area.

I bought INFERNO because I wanted the plane of 9 Hells in my campaign and didn't have the time to do it myself. Anybody who wants to spend a few weeks on it can probably do as well or better, and with the gaps in Book 1, I feel little confidence in the forthcoming Book 2, which contains the remaining five levels, the infernal City of Dis, all the *Monster Manual* Arch-Devils, and the only way off the plane . . . . Perhaps Mr. O'Dale should be playing *Napoleon* instead.

–Ron Shigeta

MOUNTAIN OF MYSTERY (Dimension Six); $4.50. Designed by Ken Ritchart. Scenario for "any fantasy role-playing system." One 24-page 8½" x 11" booklet. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

This dungeon adventure is one of Dimension Six's set of adventures for any fantasy role-playing game. On page 1, it is recommended that the buyer also purchase *The Compleat Fantasist*, the company's aid to game-system conversion. It is also stated, though, that "a simple conversion of characteristics and statistics will allow a Game Master to operate any system's characters," with the impression given that *The Compleat Fantasist* is not absolutely necessary for conversion.

It's a fine ideal – a dungeon convertible to any FRPG. MOUNTAIN OF MYSTERY, though, is not it. The cover art is good, the dungeon map is clear, and the material organization is fine, but these are really the only plusses to this adventure.

This dungeon is no more convertible to various game systems than any other; in fact, it is intrinsically more difficult than many. It is set up in *Dungeons and Dragons* terminology (with side listings for T&T only), and all the treasures are straight out of D&D. Furthermore, the entire dungeon is chock-full of clerics, which character class belongs unalterably to D&D alone. So much for adaptability.

All the conversion-ease claims might be overlooked if this were an imaginative or fun dungeon. It isn't. MOUNTAIN OF MYSTERY is set in a land where the major deities are Athena and Kulkulkan. This kind of illogic runs rampant through the dungeon, where one can encounter hill giant thieves with dexterities of 18, character class-altering sofas, and mind-switching statues. In all, a very missable adventure.

–Aaron Allston

THE NINE DOCTRINES OF DARKNESS (Dimension Six); $5.00. Designed by Randy Fraser. Scenario for "any fantasy role-playing system." One 24-page 8½" x 11" booklet. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

This adventure supplement, designed in *Dungeons and Dragons* terms (though it's part of the Dimension Six line of supplements made for conversion to any FRPG system) tells of a book of arcane knowledge. The history section of the booklet relates the book's origin, its disappearance, and its eventual reappearance in the possession of a good elven-king.

The setup is somewhat interesting, and appropriate for parties of any alignment. Evil characters will want the Doctrine of Darkness to increase their power; neutral souls can attempt to pilfer the item and cash it with the nearest Archdevil; good players will want to defend the elven-king. The basic scenario presented would probably play best with a neutral-to-evil party trying to steal the book. This adventure is flexible enough that it could be adapted and expanded to campaign proportions, in which the forces of evil arm and march against the good defenders of King Locklomin, with an occasional guest appearance by an Archdevil, or (if the DM wishes) another Doctrine of Darkness, a companion volume to the one held by the elves.

The work needed for such an expansion would be better spent on developing a "real" campaign, though; one designed by the DM for his own world. DMs wanting to use this supplement would do well to transfer the maps onto graph and hex paper; the dungeon levels are crude, and one wilderness area is not only not rendered on hexes, it doesn't have a distance scale. Also, the game's much-touted adaptability to other FRPGs suffers the same flaws as *Mountain of Mystery* (reviewed also in this issue).

All in all, this adventure seemed to be a campaign-sized set of ideas, not wholly developed, and not really worth the cost.

–Aaron Allston

OVERKILL, 2nd edition (Flying Buffalo); $3.00. Designed by Michael Stackpole; solo dungeon for *Tunnels and Trolls*. 26-page 8½" x 11" booklet. One player; one half to two hours. Published 1980.

This is a total redesign of the now out-of-print Mike Brines first edition.

Following the end of the Khazan-Ranger War the Death Host of Lerotra'hh turns south.

The citadel Overkill of the mage Marionarsis guards the pass called the Gap in the Teeth of the Gods. Up to twelve levels of character may play in this adventure (for example, one 4th level leader, a 2nd level wizard, and six 1st level warriors) making this solo squad level if desired.

Routes vary in difficulty from moderate to suicidal, allowing selected characters to be seasoned in the moderate route (once discovered) before going on to other adventures. Magic-users may take part: the use of a magic matrix provides for the casting of spells with varying success at different paragraphs. The idea of a solitaire adventure tied into an ongoing history gives more zest to solo gaming. The cover and interior art by Chris Carlson add to the atmosphere.

The more difficult routes take a terrific toll of characters and can degenerate into fatal but boring brawls with wandering monsters. The generally high fatality rate and squad-level nature of this adventure call for methods of rapidly generating superior sword fodder. One way is to develop model character cards for different units of the Death Host. This cuts down on paperwork while still fielding a versatile force. If a player wishes to generate an upper-level character with an improved chance of survival, model character cards from the Death Host offer a logical framework for such creation.

The Stackpole OVERKILL is a sound solo adventure. The excessive difficulty of some routes will involve frustration. OVERKILL rewards perserverance with enjoyment.

–Gerard E. Giannattasio

PORTALS OF TORSH (Judges Guild); $3.98. Designed by Rudy Kraft. Scenario for *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons*. One 48-page 8½" x 11" booklet. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

Anyone really interested in a pre-fab lizard-man continent may want to look at this one. PORTALS OF TORSH presents us with a small continent mainly stocked with lizard-men and prehistoric reptiles, as well as a human-dominated plateau community. Potential dungeon, ruin, and wilderness encounters are offered up.

This adventure has one advantage in that it is specifically designed to be accessible by any number of campaigns. The portals of the title are teleportation portals, built by a lost race, which are scattered across the continent of Torsh. One or more may be used for travel to and from the DM's home world.

However, logical access is not that big of a plus. The adventure is simply not very interesting. Characters can wander around wasting monsters, gathering loot, and gaining experience, all without having much fun.

Overall, this supplement will probably appeal only to those DMs who aren't imaginative enough to create something better.

–Aaron Allston

THE SPELLCASTER'S BIBLE (The Playing Board); $5.95. 6" x 8½" book. Published 1979.

The 160 spells in this addendum are adaptable to any FRP game using experience levels and classes, though it is written with D&D in mind and includes an original magic system of its own.

The spells range from the harmless to the outrageous, and though there are some worth having, such as Dragon Sleep and Watery Protection. There are also a lot of duplications and just plain duds. GMs will have to weed out spells that are unplayable and make adjustments for those that are. The spells range up to the 15th level (usable by 30th level MUs!), and consist of stuff like Mass Disintegration, the Neutron Effect (!!), and the Tidal Wave.

THE SPELLCASTER'S BIBLE appears to be another example of a product that has been released without thorough playtesting or thought, and is with few exceptions, not very useful.

–Ron Shigeta

TOLLENKAR'S LAIR (Metagaming); $2.95. Designed by Steve Jackson. Supplement to *The Fantasy Trip*. One twenty-page 8½" x 11" booklet. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

TOLLENKAR'S LAIR is a complete, ready-to-play *Fantasy Trip* labyrinth in six levels. The ability of the opposition and the treasure to be had increase progressively as the players descend, as does the detail of the design. The upper levels are populated with run-of-the-mill hoods, randomly selected from a *Death Test*-like "Thug Table," but the much more formidable mercenaries and sorcerers in the depths of the dungeon are fully described with their lists of spells and talents and descriptions of their personal appearences. The booklet contains a map of the labyrinth (requiring coloring in) and detailed diagrams of the rooms at appropriate points in the text, as well as comprehensive background information for the Game Master and a Players' Introduction. *TFT: Adv. Melee* and *Adv. Wizard* are required for playing some parts of the dungeon.

The greatest strength of TOLLENKAR'S LAIR is its extensive detail. It is logically arranged and the significant characters are well developed. There is a fairly large amount of treasure in the labyrinth, but much of it is hidden or trapped, and it's well-protected; this is not at all a Monty Haul campaign.

Neither does it play itself. Once the alarm is sounded, the GM will have to keep track of the actions of his characters; they don't wait in their rooms to be slaughtered. If you consider this to be a disadvantage, then you'll get more enjoyment from your money by spending it on a Micro-Quest.

This adventure is a must for most *Fantasy Trip* GMs, especially beginning ones, both as a campaign in its own right, and as an example of what can be done with a TFT dungeon design.

–Karl Mueller

ADVERTISERS

Automated Simulations 13
Avalon Hill 3
Chaosium 8
Creative Computing 11, 17
De Jager & Co. 23
Emprise Game Systems 13
Martian Metals . . . . . back cover
Metagaming . . . . . inside front cover, 15
Simutek 12
SPI . . . . . mailer inside back cover
Superior Simulations 7
Task Force Games . . . . . mailer back cover
The Space Gamer . . . . . inside back cover; mailer inside front cover; 19
Uncontrollable Dungeon Master 29
Zocchi 30

PLAY AIDS

ARDUIN CHARACTER SHEETS COMBINED PAK (International Gamers Assn.); $6.50. Designed by David A. Hargrave. 24 8½" x 11" sheets for use with D&D (especially the Arduin variant) or other RPG's. Published 1980.

There must be dozens of "character record sheets" on the market now. This one is more attractive than most; each sheet has blanks for information on one side and a full-page illustration on the other. Printing is slightly foggy black on parchment-covered cardboard; should hold up well under repeated erasing. Some of the spaces are a little small to hold all the information for an experienced character.

If you are using anything but Arduin-style D&D, many of the spaces will have to be relabeled, leaving you with even less space to write in. Some of the calligraphy is hard to read, even as it is. A general request to people designing forms: Don't try to make the LITTLE print fancy and artistic, please!

Character sheets are useful, and this one isn't bad. My only quibble is the price. At $6.50 for a pack of 24, most people would rather design their own and make photocopies. Not as pretty, but easier on the budget.

– Steve Jackson

THE DUNGEON (Dimension Six); basic set sells for $9.95. Game aid for role-playing and miniatures games.

THE DUNGEON is a set of interchangeable parts that gamers can use to build actual "dungeon" scenes for 25mm miniatures. There are floors, walls, doors, stairs, and even some rather cute "secret doors." Average size of pieces is about 3" x 2". The material is light, but stacks well. The paint job is all right; serious dioramists will want to touch it up and individualize each section.

Not in any sense a necessary item, but a lot of fun for those who like the visual aspects of gaming, The $9.95 "basic set" provides enough pieces to set up an area for a small encounter. Supplementary sets of various sorts are available to increase the size of your layout; these sets contain 2 to 5 pieces each and sell for $2 to $3.

If you're a miniatures fan, you ought to look at these. The only real problem is that they're meant for a square-grid layout. If you use a hex-grid system like *DragonQuest* or TFT, THE DUNGEON will do you much less good.

–Steve Jackson

THE FANTASY CARTOGRAPHER'S FIELD BOOK (Judges Guild); $3.95. 95-page 8½" x 11" booklet. Published 1980.

Four different types of grids are included in this book: 5mm (one fifth inch) hex grid, 10/inch square grid, 5/inch square grid, and a numbered hex grid. Facing each page of grids is a whole page for recording scale, contents, and key. A key is provided for those who wish to us the JG system. Or the mapper may choose to use the preceding page and remove pages without disturbing other maps. Some of the pages are in black type, to allow photocopying, and the rest are in camera-blind blue so the map may be copied without the grid lines showing. There are two pages in the front with page numbers and blank spaces so the mapper can write in his own index to his maps.

This is not a very beautiful book, but who needs beauty for a hex grid system? The pages are of a good size for almost any system or campaign, from D&D to TFT to historical wargames. With four different types of grids, you can find close enough to the scale you want to map in, if not *the* scale you need. The blank index in the front is very helpful in finding just the map you want in the 90 pages of material you may have in the book. The pages are of sturdy paper so you can erase, and even write with a felt-tipped pen without too much loss of clarity. The key suggestions are very extensive and cover almost every contingency that can be thought of by a game master. If you happen to think of one they haven't, there is room to add yours in.

There is only one problem – the pages aren't numbered beyond page 6. A paragraph in the introduction tells the reader that pages such-and-such are printed in black to let the mapper copy the pages complete with lined grids underneath. But when I looked for these pages, I found no page numbers. The easy way to solve this problem is, of course, to number the pages yourself.

If there are any avid gamers who don't need this book, I would like to meet them. For $4, almost any gamer can afford to get this playing aid. The publishers even suggest using these pages for submitting your designs for publication. And as some of the pages in each type of grid will reproduce, you don't need to go out and buy several packages of graph paper and hex paper. You can make your own.

–Elisabeth Barrington

COMPUTER GAMES

ADVENTURE (Atari Games); $25.95. Cartridge for Atari Home Video Game Computer. Includes one cartridge and an instruction pamphlet. Three scenarios for one player; playing time about 30 minutes. Published spring 1980.

ADVENTURE is a fantasy role-playing game for video game buffs. The player controls a character whose quest is to find an enchanted chalice and return with it to his castle. The playing area is *much* larger than a single television screen; moving the character off the screen changes the scenery, which includes castles, mazes, and catacombs (i.e. mazes with limited visibility). There are several dragons which can devour the character, forcing the player to begin again with a new character. When this happens, the game is *not* re-started, other objects remain as they were.

This game is conceptually rich. There many magical items which can aid a character; keys to open and close castle gates, a magic sword against the dragons, a bridge allowing passage through walls, and a magnet to attract other magic. The quests become progressively nastier in the different scenarios. In the third, objects and menaces are randomly placed so the player doesn't know where to look first. There are also hazards the player creates for himself: it is possible for objects to become trapped inside the walls, by improper use of the magic bridge. This requires caution.

The designers have added a "spoiler" to this game, which works a little too well. There is a bat which flies around and grabs things needed by the player. It may also seize objects being currently carried, trading them for less useful items, often hazardous ones like live dragons. This was apparently intended to slow the game down, which it does, but it also causes great frustration, and almost turns the game into one of chance.

ADVENTURE is a good game, as video games are measured. It is neither as interesting nor as complex as *Superman*, but it shows great promise for things to come. If you have access to the Atari game computer, it is an entertaining cartridge to have.

–Norman Howe

DUNJONQUEST is a series of computer games introduced by Automated Simulations. As of now, there are three games in the series: *The Temple of Apshai* ($24.95), *The Datestones of Ryn* ($14.95), and *Morloc's Tower* ($14.95). Each is a role-playing game that comes with program on tape or disk and a rulebook. The games are for one player and take 20 minutes and up to play. Introduced in late 1979, DUNJONQUEST is available for the Pet, TRS-80, and Apple II microcomputers.

The games are bug-free and of good quality, complete with graphic maps of the area that you are in. The rulebook contains stories, hints, and info on monsters and treasures. The graphics, at least on the Apple, are excellent. Each of the monsters actually looks like what it should be. I was most impressed by the fireballs in *Morloc's Tower.* It is probably one of the best graphic pictures that I have ever seen. It is in real time. If you wait too long, you're going to get pounded by the Creeping Crud or whatever other beast you are battling. Using your array of arrows, magic arrows, and other weaponry, you must vanquish your adversaries. Just when you think you are a pro (probably after defeating eleven vampire bats), you'll run into something really tough like a fire elemental.

Placement of treasures and monsters are random, but one monster or item may have an affinity for a certain area. The treasures may be valuable, magic, or totally useless. It's up to you to find out which is needed and which to discard. This adds a challenge to the game, even to a player who has become an expert at vanquishing deadly monsters.

I find several weaknesses in the games, however. The playing area does not change as does the placement of the monsters. And it is too easy to win. For instance, *Morloc's Tower*, the hardest one in the series, took me only thirty minutes to complete victoriously. There are a few other weaknesses, but nothing tragic.

These games are quite good, but perhaps overpriced a bit. You're on your own with this one.

–Alan Isabelle

FS1 FLIGHT SIMULATOR (SubLogic, Box V, Savoy, IL 61874); $25.00 ($.75 postage). Cassette for the TRS-80 Level I or II, 16K. (Also available for the Apple II). One level of difficulty. One player; playing time indefinite.

You sit in the cockpit of a slightly modernized Sopwith Camel. Look beyond the cowling and down the long British aerodome runway. Quickly check on the radar for a one mile radius. Run down the preflight checklist. Elevators up. Full throttle. Watch the runway disappear below you as the horizon tilts. Up landing gear (minor anachronism) and fly between the mountains. Slowly learn turns, the level flight, then landing (tough as hell). Once the basics are mastered you move on to loops and barrel rolls. Then you are ready to take on the Germans. Try and bomb the fuel depot deep in enemy territory. See the five German fighters scramble from their field. You crash (again). Curse you, Red Baron!

This is a first generation simulator, but that detracts not one whit from the superb job done by SubLogic. You *are* flying: spins, loops, turns, glides, landing, stalls, take-off, taxiing – the display and program handle them beautifully. The controls are simple to learn and make sense. Cockpit readouts meet FAA regs and work nicely. The low altitude foot-by-foot altimeter is invaluable in nape of earth flight. The one-mile radius radar display makes up for lack of side and rear views. The German fighter pilot capabilities range from OK to very good and seeing them stacked over their field was almost a physical pleasure. I have yet to knock one of them down, but give me time.

The flaws are trivial. Regarding graphics, enemy flights are represented by dots whose distance and altitude are hard to judge. It is easy to become disoriented while practicing, as there is recognizable terrain in only 11% of the map. Perhaps most importantly, there is no evaluator to rate the quality of one's landing. (Was that stall-in from fifty feet up a crash or a bouncer or a half-decent landing?)

All things considered, this is the single most impressive computer game I have seen. It creates a whole new standard. I most strongly urge you to buy and see for yourself.

–J. Mishcon

NETWORK (Edu-Ware); $19.95. Program by David Mullich for 48K Apple II with disk drive. Two players; playing time 1-4 hours. Published 1980.

This program puts you in the unenviable position of Fred Silverman and the rest of the TV big shots who have to come up with a winning prime time schedule. The game pits two players (NBC and CBS) against each other and the computer (ABC) in a struggle to maximize the ratings and minimize production expenses. The players start by bidding on new shows and putting them into their lineup or just into cold storage. Once the prime-time schedule is filled, the game goes through a five-week cycle, updating ratings for all the shows and computing the total earnings (based on the production costs and ratings for the shows) for each network. At the end of a five-week cycle, the ratings of all the shows are displayed and the players are given the chance to juggle the schedule, including dropping shows from the lineup and replacing them with others which have not yet been used. At the end of thirteen weeks, new shows can't be acquired (to replace the losers). At the end of 26 weeks, the game can be continued, ended, or saved on disk to be continued later. Success is judged solely on the basis of who has the most money, which is an unfortunately accurate portrayal of reality.

A lot of time, thought, and effort went into this game. It makes excellent use of the game paddle for menu selection and input (the keyboard is never touched). Displays are nicely done, and the data base of shows is impressive. The simulation appears to be accurate and really gives you a feel for what the bigwigs at the Big Three must go through.

Unfortunately, I just could not get interested in the game. It moves slowly and requires (for intelligent play) that the players keep track of a lot of information that is not always easily accessible. One friend I played against quit out of boredom at one point, and I found myself yawning. There is a lack of tension, which means that personal interest must be the overriding factor in playing the game – and I'm just not that interested in network planning. If you are, then this is the game for you; otherwise, I'm afraid you'll just be disappointed.

–Bruce Webster

SPACE/SPACE II (Edu-Ware); $29.95/ $24.95. Two programs (sold separately) by David Mullich, Steven Penderson, and Sherwin Steffin for the 48K Apple II with disk drive. One or two players; playing time 15 minutes up. Published 1979.

These two games are really just different scenarios for the same game, SPACE – or should I say Computer *Traveller*? Yes, this is a solitaire role-playing game based on GDW's *Traveller* system. Both disks contain a program to allow you to generate characters using the basic military-enlistment procedure with some interesting changes and enhancements. You can then use these characters for the various other games, which include man-to-man combat (the only two player game), exploration, interstellar commerce, stock market speculation, and a religious quest. Each character exists as a disk file (which is deleted automatically if the character is killed during a game). The information on the character (money, experience, talents, psychological and physiological profile, etc.) affects performance during games and is affected by games.

These games show the same ingenious displays and techniques as *Network* (and the rest of the Edu-Ware games, for that matter). They have a lot of promise and potential. It is easy to sit down and play one of the games in a fairly short period; most of the games allow you to quit at any point, an important point for those of us without much time. And they cover a wide range of topics.

Unfortunately, the games are half-finished and suffer from several flaws and a few outright bugs. Most of the games are too simplistic – for example, *Trader* (interstellar commerce) only allows you to travel between two worlds, each one of which has only two cargoes for you to buy. *Trader* also has a full-fledged bug which prevents you from paying off your ship (fix: change line 6320 to "IF IP (-LP) . . ." and 6330 to "LP = LP + IP"). There are other minor annoyances, including an incredible rash of mis-spellings ("payed," "gallactic," "desciple," "aquire," "proffession," among

WRITING REVIEWS FOR THE SPACE GAMER

Capsule Reviews

Most of the reviews we print will be "capsule" reviews – 400 words or less. We pay $5 for each capsule review accepted. We want to run a review for EVERY new sf or fantasy game or supplement. During 1980, we'll also accept reviews of older games.

Each capsule review should be five paragraphs long, and contain:

(1) Basic information. Present these facts, in this order: Name of the game; publisher; price; designer. (If applicable: "supplement to ———," "companion to ———," or similar note.) Format: list of components, with sizes of maps and rulebooks, number of counters, etc. Number of players; playing time; publication date.

(2) General description of the game: background, the sides, course of play, special features, etc.

(3) Strong points. Discuss what is good about the game; in every game; there IS something worthwhile. Don't try to be Pollyanna – just point out the game's successes.

(4) Weak points. Every game has its problems, too. If the only faults you can find are minor ones, say so. If the game is fatally flawed, come right out and SAY SO. If you can phrase your criticisms as suggestions for improvement, do so.

(5) Summation: your overall opinion of the game. Who should and should not buy it, and why.

All reviews must be signed; the reviewer's name WILL be printed. No game may be reviewed by its designer or by an employee of the publisher. (Designer's articles are welcome, but must be billed as such!) Final note: If you can write a complete review in less than the full 400 words, by all means do so.

This review format is designed to encourage fairness and to give the reader enough information to let him decide whether he wants to buy that game. Keep that in mind when you write. This is a short review, NOT a complete analysis. For those who want to write longer reviews, each issue will have one or two –

Featured Reviews

These will be game reviews 1,000 to 2,000 words long. They should contain *all the above information*, plus whatever else the reviewer wants to say. They may be written in any format. A featured review may cover either a new game or one that has been on the market for some time. If TSG has not already published a capsule review, write one, separately, and submit it at the same time. We may even use both.

others). These games should be pulled off the market and thoroughly rewritten and upgraded.

I'm afraid I can't recommend these games in their current condition, at least not at their price. If you've got money and time to burn, though, you might get them and rewrite them yourselves – but do so at your own risk.

–Bruce Webster

SUPERMAN (Atari Games); $29.95. Cartridge for Atari Home Video Computer. Includes one cartridge plus instruction booklet. One player, playing time 4-40 minutes, depending on complexity level and player skill. Published fall 1979.

SUPERMAN is a video game based on the comic book character. The player controls the Superman with a joystick-type lever. The figure on the screen can walk, fly, lift and carry objects, and examine adjacent video frames with his x-ray vision. The player must capture and imprison Lex Luthor and his henchmen, rebuild the bridge they have destoyed, and return as Clark Kent to his job at the *Daily Planet.*

The format of this game is unusual. Moving a character off the edge of the screen places him in a different "frame" with different characteristics. These frames are connected in a logical fashion to provide a much larger playing area than is common to most video games. There is a subway system enabling quick travel between widely separated frames. One frame contains a telephone booth where Clark Kent becomes Superman and vice versa. Another contains the towers of the bridge, and so on. Hindering Superman are several kryptonite devices which destroy his powers until he can find Lois Lane. There is also a helicopter which tends to carry away the objects needed by the hero. All this makes the game a fascinating challenge.

The only weak point in the system is in the frame edges, which are not clearly defined. A player may find himself in another frame when he thought the edge was farther away. Also, objects dropped on a frame boundary are very hard to pick up. Another drawback, not exactly a flaw, is the high cost of this game. Thirty dollars is a lot for a single-scenario game. If the other Atari games don't interest a player, the expenditure is definitely not worthwhile.

On the other hand, this is the best Atari game I have yet seen. It's playable, enthralling, and has excellent graphics. If you don't want to buy the game, at least try to find someone who will let you play it. It's very good.

–Norman Howe

TERRORIST (Edu-Ware); $29.95. Program by Steven Penderson for 48K Apple II with disk drive. Two players; playing time 10 minutes to 10 hours. Published 1980.

The current situation in Iran and other recent incidents around the world give this game an uncomfortable relevancy. It pits two players against each other, one representing a terrorist group and the other a government negotiator, placing both in a dangerous situation where each one is trying to achieve goals the other is intent on preventing. First, the society's relative values concerning individual rights, state rights, and political/economic stability are determined. The terrorist selects one of three extremist groups (each of which has different aims) and then puts together a priorized list of appropriate demands (selected from a predetermined pool for that particular group). Once this is done, play starts. Each player uses a paddle to display and execute courses of action which are determined for each player by the particular scenario (arm bomb, make demands, concede demands, attack, surrender, etc.). The game is real-time – you can carry out an option by turning your paddle until the option is displayed and then pressing your button – and ends only when the situation is somehow resolved (surrender, resigning, killing all the terrorists, meeting all the demands, etc.). Perhaps the most interesting is the "Negotiate" option. If both players choose this option at the same time, both paddles are disabled and the players are instructed to sit and talk.

I cannot state how impressed I am with this game. As a computer program, it makes excellent use of the display screen for output and the paddles for input, as well as using a less-than-trivial data base. As a game, it is very playable (if you're into role-playing) and certainly exciting. As a simulation, it is a very sobering look into what is fast becoming an all-too-pervasive form of international politics. It requires a serious attitude on the part of the players – not somber, but involved. It is not a game which can be played casually.

There are a few minor flaws in the game, which are more irritation than anything. The worst one is the interminable beeping that occurs when a large body of supporters join the terrorist group; you may think that the program is stuck in a loop, but it isn't, so just be patient.

The game is not cheap, but if you think you are interested at all in this topic, by all means get it. Just be careful who you play it with; like *Diplomacy* and other political games, you could lose some friends if they take the game too personally.

Bruce Webster

WINDFALL (Edu-Ware); cassette $14.95, disk $19.95. Program by David Mullich for 32K Apple II. One player; playing time 20 minutes. Published 1980.

This is another appropriate game for our times, placing you in charge of a large oil company during a time of rising prices and falling supplies. You manipulate the wages of your dockyard and service station employees as well as the price of your gasoline, while trying to get the best prices for oil and dealing with price freezing and rationing imposed by the government. Your goal? Why, maximize your profits, of course! There's an added twist: the game runs in real-time, i.e., the program never stops updating all the important values, regardless of whether or not you do anything. There is a fixed time limit for each game, making each game last from 10 to 20 minutes (depending on how many commands you give). At the end of the game, the company's total profits (or losses) are computed and your performance is evaluated.

This is an educational and well-done (albeit quite simple) simulation of the topic. It has a number of impressive displays, including one showing lines of cars at your and your competitors' stations. It is not quickly mastered. If you don't mind the price, this would also make an excellent "what does it do?" program to amaze and entertain your friends who wonder why you bought that mysterious device (i.e., your home computer).

If there is a problem with this game, it is that the topic may not be all that interesting to you, or that the treatment may be too simple for your tastes. Beyond that, I can think of no serious objections to the game.

–Bruce Webster

HISTORICAL

BEACHHEAD (Yaquinto); $7.00. Designed by Michael S. Matheny. Double record jacket with one 16-page 8½" x 11" rules booklet, 240 die-cut counters, a 24" x 12" map (on the inside of the record jacket), one sheet of tables, and three ziplock bags for counter storage. Two players; playing time varies. Published 1980.

ERRATA

Stratagems has pointed out several errors in the review of their game STARCRUISER last issue: "the review says the map depicts 41 solar systems – there are 42. The victory conditions, incorrectly related in the review, are as follows: The player who first achieves an alliance of 25 planets by getting (peaceably or forcibly) 24 planets to join or the player who can still field a spacecraft when his opponent cannot is the winner."

The review also criticized the program feature which allows players to "probe" enemy worlds freely. Simutek comments that "The program does not inhibit such use – which is, again, illegal – because such a safeguard could easily be overcome by a determined cheater." That is: the program allows it, but players shouldn't do it.

* * *

The price for GDW'S RESEARCH STATION GAMMA was given last issue as $.98. This was a typographical error. The correct price is $4.98.

DEATH AND DESTRUCTION

A game not of this century, but of the next!
A game that proves the fact that chess is too limiting!

Price: $8.95 plus $1 for shipping and handling.
Order from:

Uncontrollable Dungeon Master

P. O. Box 113, Hinesdale, GA 31313

BEACHHEAD is one of Yaquinto's new "Album Games" packaged in a double record jacket. Counters and rules are stored in the jacket sleeves; except for the bulge of the counters, the whole thing works fairly well. The four color map is abstracted to show "typical" island terrain. There are four levels of elevation, forests, built-up areas, beaches, swamps, and a river. The counter mix includes various types of infantry squads, machine guns, mortars, landing craft, tanks (you just can't have a WWII game without tanks, even in the Pacific Ocean), and three different types of Japanese fortifications.

Physical quality of the components is excellent. Yaquinto is now obviously even with Avalon Hill in this area. Quite frankly, I don't understand how Yaquinto can put out such a lush looking game for $7.

There is also a special "Sgt. Stryker" counter for those who felt too embarrassed to buy *Panzer Pranks*. Stryker exercises a kind of "John Wayne" effect on the play, and whenever it is used, the game should end with a tiny American flag being raised on a Level IV terrain hex.

With the limited number of scenarios and the fixed map, it is possible that BEACHHEAD might "wear out," i.e., after repeated play, both sides will develop optimal strategies, giving one side an unfair advantage.

Still, Matheny has given us a good, solid design. He avoided the error of taking European combat and calling the trees "jungle" instead of "forest." The landing craft rules demonstrate the problems of amphibious invasion. BEACHHEAD moves the "beer and pretzels" game up to the "dry white and cheese" level – a hearty offering with delicate overtones. Highly recommended as one of the best values of 1980.

–Nick Schuessler

BOOKS

THE COMPLETE WARGAMES HANDBOOK: HOW TO PLAY, DESIGN, AND FIND THEM by James F. Dunningan. Published by William Morrow and Company, 1980. 272 pages; $7.95 paperback, $14.95 hardcover.

Jim Dunnigan is the co-founder and chief designer at Simulations Publications, Inc. (SPI) and has cranked out more than 300 wargames over the past 10 years. The book is in the best "everything you were afraid to ask" tradition. No new insights into boardgaming; no careful distillation of Dunnigan's vast experience. Instead we get a re-hash of old copies of *Strategy and Tactics* and *Moves*.

WARGAMES HANDBOOK has all the expected chapter titles: "What is a Wargame?" "How to Play," "History of Wargames," etc. The first and last chapters deal with *The Drive on Metz*, a simple historical simulation included in the book (no counters) to illustrate the basic points.

There is the obligatory chapter on "Computers and Wargames." Here he gives some useful background on the military's use of computers in wargaming. And while Dunnigan is hesitant about computers for historical simulations, he does allow: "An ideal game for computers is the role-playing type game; where it is now rather difficult to play solitaire, the computer handily takes care of that, starting off with the sequence in which you negotiate with the innkeeper for your accoutrements – armor, weapons, and so forth – before venturing into the dungeon."

Most interesting are the two chapters on types of wargames. In "Why Play Wargames" he gives a good summary of historical periods from 3100 B.C. forward and explains how various trends (gunpowder, ironworking, etc.) are reflected in game designs. The "Wargames in Print" chapter is a useful adjunct, but the proliferation of titles will no doubt leave it obsolete before another snow falls.

There is a strong (natural) bias toward SPI in this book. Mention is made of Avalon Hill, but the growing "third world" is largely ignored. This preoccupation with the "big two" leads to some curious lapses. Metagaming is listed in the publishers section, but *The Space Gamer* is omitted from the magazines section. Except for the *Metz* chapters, the illustrations are mainly fragments of contents pages from game rules.

No doubt there is a need for a good, basic introductory book to wargaming. And no doubt Dunnigan, high guru of game design, would be the logical choice for such an effort. WARGAMES HANDBOOK will (no doubt) fill the void until something better comes along.

Meanwhile respectability is a warm blanket, and seeing a book about wargaming published by a heavyweight like Morrow should make us all feel better about the hobby. No more blushes and stutters. But if you know anything at all about wargaming already, you have no need for the book. Anyone who has played one or two boardgames would be bored to distraction, and the price tag makes it too expensive for the few interesting chapters.

Still, with this kind of attention, Jim will need some bucks to trade in his mufti for a three-piece. WARGAMES HANDBOOK might make an interesting Christmas present for the friend or relative who has exibited a passing interest in your hobby.

–Nick Schuessler

You could be the one to find...

the treasure of the silver dragon™

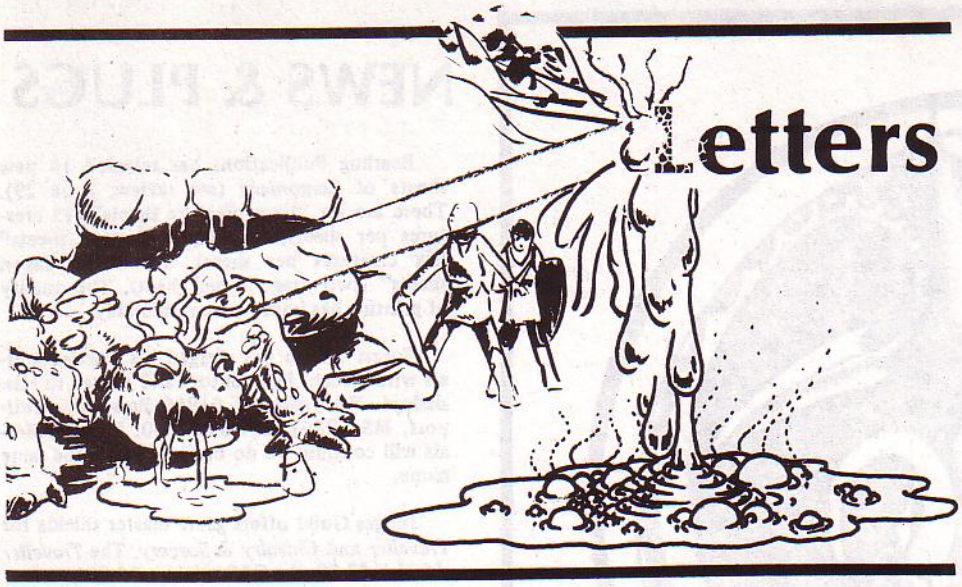
Join The Fantasy Trip™

and begin your search!

Ask for further details at your local hobby store!

Zocchi Distributors

01956 Pass Road
Gulfport, MS 39501
601-896-8600



Letters

To Steve Jackson:

I bought *Melee* when it first came out. It was one of the few games I could get non-gamers to play because it was simple, exciting, and each game could be kept to a short playing time. When *Wizard* came out, I immediately bought it. When Metagaming said TFT was coming out, I started designing my world and getting ready to gamemaster a TFT campaign. Well, many moons went by, but finally TFT was released. After that long of a wait, even with the disorganization and the typos, I have had many hours of enjoyment with the system, I'm even having a limited amount of success converting some of the D&D people out there.

Now I hear that you're having nothing to do with TFT. You don't plan on writing anything more for it, and you don't even GM. What a disappointment. Your design and communication skills made TFT the great game it is. Please don't walk away from your child. I hope to read and play many more TFT products written and designed by you. Tell your adoring public it isn't so.

James G. Strickland
Omaha, Nebraska

Thanks for the kind words.

I didn't want to "walk away from my child." It really hurt. It hurts worse every time I get a letter like yours. But I had to.

There are two things I want to achieve as a game designer. First is a reasonable assurance of creative control. If a game is going to have my name on it, I want to be able to assure myself – and my readers – *that it gets published in a clean and organized fashion, and that it gives good value for the price asked.*

The second, of course, is a good living. I enjoy game design more than anything else I've ever done . . . law, advertising, precious metals . . . even magazine publishing. But game design pays worse than any of these. Some publishers pay more generous royalties than others, but very little of the money you spend for a game ever makes it to the designer. Example: For three years of work on **In The Labyrinth**, *I earned less than even a beginning attorney drags down his first year of practice.*

But that's the story. Any future game design work I do will be under circumstances that let me earn what my time is worth . . . and that assure me that the game will be the best possible publication when it hits the stores.

–SJ

TSG 29 was the best issue yet from its new publisher. The protective mailing cover was nice and the Cylon cartoons insure that I will keep the cover on rather than tear it off and tossing it. Also, for once every article in a magazine (including my other subscriptions) was interesting and/or useful. All but the featured review, that is. . . .

"Farewell to Crane" was a big disappointment. I turned to the article hoping to find a good objective review on the strong and weak points of a play-by-mail game which I am involved in. Instead, I find a lengthy discourse on a minor quibble between the reviewer and the gamemaster over the use of technology. I say minor quibble because, although Mr. Johnson obviously thinks it important to the game, "technology" was never mentioned in the basic *Tribes of Crane* rulebook. If he encountered technology, it was one of those little surprises that are constantly turning up in the game, and the GM felt the need to regulate it. And the will of the GM e'er reigns supreme, else chaos fall upon Crane. The reviewer then added injury to insult by revealing many little secrets about the world of Crane which would otherwise have been revealed to me naturally as the game progressed, turn by turn, or through the ever-risky (but fun) practice of trading info with other players/tribal chiefs. I feel that I have been somehow cheated and I hope the gods of Crane have vengeance on Forest, Chief of the Elkhound Tribe. I, Rhon Trimane, Chief of the Kondor People, have spoken.

Ronald James
Greenwood, IN

I like the idea of printing scenarios, variants, character stats, etc. after the fiction; this will add new life to the games I play. I enjoyed the story, "The Temple of Life" in TSG 29. Print more good fiction like that, some of the stuff in past issues wasn't too good.

More articles about adding new men, creatures, and weapons to TFT, *Traveller*, and AD&D; about various companies, one or two more featured reviews, more Game Master (which helps a lot), and MORE PAGES. (I can't stress that enough.)

Good luck with the new TSG; it's still the best 'zine around.

Steve Crotty
Hugo, MN

It is with some regret that I write this letter, for I fear it will be considered a minority voice, and as such be given little credence. *The Space Gamer*, once a professionally run, broad appeal (in its field) gaming magazine, is (has) fast become a fanzine of fair to good quality. I did not subscribe to TSG to read reviews though one or two per issue are all right, and as to fiction, I again find it intruding into space that could be better used to cover game articles. When *Analog* begins printing bad articles on space games, it will be time for TSG to start (again) printing bad fiction.

In estimating the over-the-counter sales, I would not be surprised if they had shown a continued drop in the last few issues, due first to the comic art covers, which are fine for $.35 comic books, but don't stand up well on $2.00 magazines, and on the pulp interior, again a throwback to the comic stand. The pennies saved this way could well cost you the retail market.

The letters printed so far seem to indicate overwhelming support for the direction you have taken. If this truly represents the feelings of the vast majority of your readers, then you will succeed. I can't help wondering, though, how many subscribers feel they have been robbed of a magazine of great interest (including the much-discussed psychology articles), and given in its place a changeling of narrow and parochial viewpoint.

In any case, I ask that you reconsider your decision to make *The Space Gamer* into an in-group type fanzine.

Nevin J. Templin
Willingboro, NJ

You seem to be more interested in "good writing" (whatever that means) than you are in "good ideas". I would rather read a very amateur and extremely boring article which contains a good idea than an excellently written "professional" article that doesn't really have a good idea. From my reading of every magazine (F&SF type) you reviewed over the past few years, I would say that most original and good ideas have appeared in general in the most boring and poorly written articles. I haven't cared because I am far more interested in the idea than I am in the way in which it is presented....

I regret to report that yet another "major" wargame publisher has decided to take advantage of its captive audience.

I bought a copy of GDW's *Azhanti High Lightning* yesterday and got a nasty shock: it seems that they have already revised *High Guard*. Nothing wrong with that, you say, there are always errors to correct and improvements to make . . . I agree, there is nothing wrong so far. But let me quote from page 12 of *Supplement 5: Lightning Class Cruisers*: "The substance of the new material is also contained in a three-part article contained in the *Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society* (Issues 6, 7, and 8), under the assumption that the *Journal* is the best method of dissemination of such material to those players and referees who already have the first edition of *High Guard*." Note that issues of the *Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society* each cost $2.00. Three issues will cost $6.00. Assuming the 2nd edition of *High Guard* will cost $5.98 (like the 1st edition), the kind folks at GDW are saving *Traveller* players who have the 1st edition *High Guard* a grand total of negative two cents!

Randall S. Stukey
San Antonio, TX

Contest

You have three wishes . . .

This month's contest is based on that oldest of fantasy themes: the genie in the bottle. You may assume that you have just opened the bottle, and heard the genie's offer. He gives you several days to make up your mind.

The genie will not deliberately twist your wish if you express it clearly. However, he has a sense of humor. If he can twist a carelessly-worded wish in an amusing way, he will . . . so be careful!

Your set of three wishes must fit within one of these categories:

UNSELFISH GOOD. Make three wishes that will do the most to make the world better for everyone.

SELF-INTEREST. Make three wishes that will improve your own personal lot as much as possible.

TOTAL EVIL. Make three wishes that will lead to the maximum possible death, destruction, and confusion.

(It is pure coincidence that these categories roughly match the alignments of Good, Neutral, and Evil.)

You may enter a total of three times – once in each category. Send your entries to:

WISH CONTEST
c/o The Space Gamer
PO Box 18805
Austin, TX 78760

* * *

All entries become the property of TSG. The winning entry in each category will appear in TSG; each winner will receive a 12-issue subscription. There are no other prizes, but exceptionally good runners-up may be printed if space is available. We reserve the right to award no prizes if no entries of publishable quality are received. Entries must be postmarked no later than September 30, 1980.

NEWS & PLUGS

Bearhug Publications has released 14 new sheets of *Zargonians* (see review, issue 29). There are six "large creature sheets" (15 creatures per sheet), six "giant creature sheets" (six creatures per sheet), and two "dragon sheets" (two dragons per sheet). The quality of printing has improved considerably.

Forest Brown has merged his Martian Metals with Zocchi Distributors and moved to Mississippi. New address: 01956 Pass Rd., Gulfport, MS 39501; 601-896-8600. Martian Metals will continue to do business under the same name.

Judges Guild offers game master shields for *Traveller* and *Chivalry & Sorcery*. The *Traveller* shield is $2.50; the C&S shield is $3.00.

CALENDAR

August 21-24: GENCON XIII. Wargame con; University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Kenosha, WI. Contact POB 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147; 414-248-9099.

August 29 to Sept. 1: NOREASCON 2. The 38th World SF Convention, Boston. Contact POB 46, MIT Branch Post Office, Cambridge, MA 02139.

August 30 to Sept. 1: PACIFICON. Wargame con, San Mateo, CA. Contact David G. Hinkley, POB 5833, San Jose, CA 95150; 408-374-9770 or 371-4229.

September 12-14: OTHERCON IV. SF gaming con, College Station, TX. Contact Sven Knudson, POB 3933, College Station, TX 77844; 713-775-0692 or 779-2588.

September 19-20: FALLCON. FRP con, Sycamore High School, Cincinnati, OH. Contact Wanna Play, 5923 Hamilton Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45224.

February 14-16, 1981: DUNDRACON VI. FRP gaming con, Oakland, CA. Contact @ 386 Alcatraz Ave., Oakland, CA 94618.

CONVENTION ORGANIZERS – let us know about your con! Free publicity never hurts.

READER ADS

Reader ads are available to individuals (not to companies). $5 per insertion; limit 20 words or four lines.

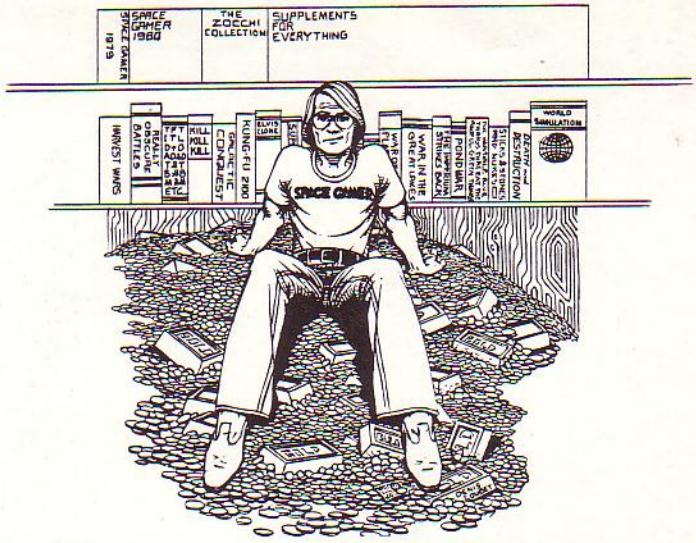
SWRG Tactical Space Computer Game. Applesoft Basic. 250 statement list and instructions, $6. Mike VanPutte, 456 Hampton, Greece, NY 14612.

SPACE WAR AD-3001 (computer moderated) play by mail. $.50 per turn. Rules only $1. Claude Buss, POB 18156, Indianapolis, IN 46218.

DMs, I'll trade my AD&D dungeons for yours. Contact Steve Cook, 15860 Chatsworth St., Granada Hills, CA 91344.

AUSTIN AREA WARGAMERS are invited to the TSG playtest sessions. Want to play, discuss and review new games from various mfrs? Call 447-7866 for information.

ARE YOU RICH?



Really wealthy? Rolling in it? Are you SO RICH that you can afford to buy every new game that comes out?

If you're that rich, turn the page. Otherwise keep reading.

The game hobby is growing by leaps and bounds. Publishers print more new games every month. Not just games . . . game supplements, game scenarios, computer software, miniatures, rulebooks . . . LOTS OF THEM.

That sounds great. But *how do you choose?* **With inflation eating your dollars, you can't afford to waste money on a game you'll play once and forget.**

That's where THE SPACE GAMER comes in. We run reviews of *every new game and game product* **in the science fiction and fantasy world. We cover** *every game publisher* **fairly, without bias. (We review a lot of historical games, too.)**

Are you into computer games? Again — SPACE GAMER to the rescue! We review new game software — all kinds. With tapes costing $15 to $20 (and up) you can't afford to waste your money on a dog. Read the reviews before you buy!

Of course, we carry more than reviews. We've got articles on strategy. Variants and scenarios for your favorite games. Letters, cartoons, art. Fiction (and every piece of fiction is followed by a game scenario or variant for that story). We even have *complete games* **in some issues.**

If you're NOT a millionaire, your subscription to TSG may be the best game buy you ever make. Don't buy games for the closets. *Read the reviews first.* **Your game budget will go a lot farther.**

Name _____

Address _____ *State* ____ *Zip* ____

☐ *Check here if this is a subscription renewal.*

Enclosed is my check for

☐ *$21 (one year - 12 issues)*

☐ *$39 (two years - 24 issues)*

☐ *$2.50 (sample copy)*

Canadian subscribers add $3 per year. Overseas subscribers add $20 per year (airmail). All payments should be in U.S. funds, please.

THE SPACE GAMER / Box 18805-T / Austin, TX 78760

TRAVELLER™

Greetings! Can't believe your eyes? It's true! As a show of solidarity with our Earthling customers, we at Martian Metals have turned our ad upside down! That means it looks right-side-up to you peculiar aliens. An explanation of how we did it would be too complex for your simple minds. Suffice it to say that an application of the hypertonic gravito-spacial inertializer to the medoplastic continuum along the V and V-prime axes, combined with certain relativistic constraints in tau-space, just flipped it right over.

(Will you quit with that hype and tell them about the Traveller figures?)

Oh, yeah. The reason we bought this great big ad is to tell you about the Traveller figures. Martian Metals is now making the official miniatures for GDW's TRAVELLER. They're in 15mm scale, and there are a whole bunch of them, and they're real neat, and we want you to go out and buy all of them, so us Martians can afford lots of grimbozzle next Merkin's Day.

(Great. Just great. Inspired ad copy.)

Thank you. I knew I could do better than that Earthling they usually get.

(Yeah. Right. WHAT'S THAT? Is that inertializer in synch? I can't. . . Gnork.)

What happened?

(Put it this way: How many doshes do you think we'll have to give the Earthlings to make up for turning a whole printing plant sideways?)

Martian Metals

Manufacturers of DRAGONSLAYERS™

01956 Pass Rd, Dept. SG
Gulfport, MS 39501
601-896-8600